

MILTON'S PROSODY

by

Robert Bridges



CLASSICAL METRES

IN ENGLISH VERSE

by

William Johnson Stone



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## INTRODUCTION

OF this book the first part, my own, has happily outlived its prefaces: it began as a simple tabulation of Milton's practice in *Paradise Lost*, to which an account of the prosody of *Samson Agonistes* was added, and in 1893 eight appendices or notes on various points. To this I now (1901) add an analysis of stress-prosody, and a chapter on the structure of the English accentual hexameter. My intention throughout has been to provide a sound foundation for a grammar of English prosody, on the basis of Milton's practice, which is chosen not as the final model, but as a convenient norma, a middle and fixed point, to which all other practice may be referred for comparison. I believe that little beyond what I have written is necessary for the purpose proposed: if I were tempted to add anything, it would be the examination of Chaucer's prosody, which in his part of the *Romaunt of the Rose* would, compared with the French original, show the origin and rationale of our traditional elisions.

The second part of this book, that by my friend Mr. Stone, must prove of great value to students. It was privately printed in 1898, and being written without

knowledge of my opinions was the cause of my first acquaintance with the author. When the Delegates of the Press asked me to prepare a new edition of my book, I thought myself very fortunate in obtaining their consent and Mr. Stone's to the association of his tract with mine; and I availed myself of his readiness to recast it from its original form (which was rather that of a plea for the introduction of classical metres into English poetry) and to make it a history and grammar of the subject. As his Essay is an independent contribution, and on a different subject from mine, I should have had nothing to say about it here, had not his sudden and lamentable death left me with an immediate responsibility; which I willingly undertake, if I may be explicit about a few matters concerning which we were not in agreement.

First, then, as to the general thesis. Mr. Stone was a convinced advocate for the introduction of classical rules of prosody into English. Upon the advisability or even the possibility of their introduction I do not myself express any opinion. Secondly, as to principles and details, I am in every point in agreement with Mr. Stone's teaching; except that I am not convinced (though I acknowledge his judgement on such a point to be better than my own) concerning the exclusion (from classical metres in English) of elisions similar to the Latin: for I do not find the intruding *w* and *y* between light syllables to be so consonantal and for-

bidding as he did. Again, I am not so hopeful as he was about the subjugation of the indeterminate vowel to classical rules of quantity. Use would perhaps convince: and it seems to me—and Mr. Stone would have agreed—that on any controverted point the reception of any rule for English verse on classical models, such as he contemplated, would have to depend on the results of actual trial and practice; and that there can be no accepted grammar of the method until some poet has written such poetry as can be, with or without minor developments or corrections, approved and accepted.

Whether or no such poetry be ever written, the practical value of Mr. Stone's paper remains very great for students, as also for those who would write any kind of verse: for the discrimination of English syllables into long and short on classical analogy and phonetic values is not only a useful exercise in itself, and an inquiry of such a sort as must aid any examination of English words as sound-units; but, if we consider how familiar classical poetry is to English poets, and how much it influences their practice, this definition of the English syllables is a necessary study for those who, through habits of English pronunciation, consciously or unconsciously misread classical verse; for nothing else can enable them to understand it correctly: and it can do this, because it will enable them to see and to remove their chief hindrance.

The history given by Mr. Stone is also of unique value, for I do not suppose that any one with the same critical intelligence and instinct in these matters can ever before have had the patience to read attentively all the inconsequent notions which have been thrown out on the subject. The rare insight and keen enthusiasm which his essay displays will be always winning from among his readers fresh mourners of his early death: for my part, though I may not here speak to the full, I shall not deny myself the opportunity of recording the tenderness of my affection and grief, and my pride in having any work of my own associated with the name of one so very dearly and deservedly beloved.

R. B.

# MILTON'S PROSODY

AN EXAMINATION OF THE RULES OF BLANK VERSE  
in Milton's later poems with an account of  
the versification of SAMSON AGONISTES &  
general notes by

ROBERT BRIDGES

*M.B., F.R.C.P., Hon. Fellow of C.C.C., Oxford*

A new edition  
Containing a Chapter on the theory of STRESS  
PROSODY & an account of the PROSODY of the  
ENGLISH ACCENTUAL HEXAMETER





# ON THE ELEMENTS OF MILTON'S BLANK VERSE IN *PARADISE LOST*

A TYPICAL blank verse may be described as obeying three conditions, (1) It has ten syllables, (2) It has five stresses, (3) It is in rising rhythm, that is, the stresses are upon the even syllables\*.

I shall examine the verse of *Paradise Lost* in three separate chapters under these three heads, giving the exceptions—

- (1) To the number of the syllables being ten. pp. 1-12.
- (2) To the number of the stresses being five. pp. 12-14.
- (3) To the stresses falling on the even syllables. pp. 15-17.

## CHAPTER I.

### OF SUPERNUMERARY SYLLABLES†.

#### A. EXTRAMETRICAL SYLLABLES.

I. AT END OF LINE. AN EXTRA SYLLABLE SOMETIMES OCCURS AT THE END OF THE LINE, more rarely in Milton than in most writers, e.g.

- (1) Of rebel Angels, by whose aid aspi(ring). i. 38 and ex. (23) (95).

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\* For an explanation of the terms *rising* and *falling* and *stress*, and for the objections to using the terms of quantitative for accentual feet, see Appendix G.

† In Chaucer the line is occasionally deficient in the number of syllables, see pp. 33-35, 86, 111. There is no instance of this in *Paradise Lost*.

## The Verse of

SOMETIMES THERE ARE TWO SUCH SYLLABLES, e.g.

- (2) Imbued, bring to their sweetness no sati(ety). viii. 216.
- (3) For solitude sometimes is best soci(ety). ix. 249. See p. 41.

II. IN OTHER PARTS OF THE LINE. In Shakespeare it is common to find an analogous syllable in the midst of the line. See App. A. And thus in *Comus*—

- (4) To quench the drouth of Phœ(bus); which as they taste. 66.
- (5) And as I passed I wor(shipped). If those you seek. 302.
- (6) And earth's base built on stub(ble). But come let's on. 599.
- (7) But for that damned magi(cian), let him be girt. 602.
- (8) Root-bound that fled Apol(lo). Fool, do not boast. 662.
- (9) Crams and blasphemes his fee(der). Shall I go on? 779.

IN P. L. MILTON DISALLOWED THE USE OF THIS SYLLABLE. In the following lines, where the rhythmical effect is partly preserved, the extra syllable is accounted for by Elision. See B. II. on next page.

- (10) Departed from (thee); and thou resemb'lst now. iv. 839.
- (11) Before (thee); and not repenting, this obtain. x. 75.
- (12) Of high collateral glo(ry): Him thrones and powers. x. 86, etc.  
etc.

1. OTHER SUPERNUMERARY SYLLABLES FALL UNDER ELISION (which term is here used as a convenient name, but not to imply that anything is cut off, or lost, or not pronounced). See App. B.

I. THE ELISIONS OF COMMON SPEECH. As in the first line,

- (13) Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit,

where the *ie* in 'disobedience' is neither a diphthong nor a disyllable. [In his earlier poems Milton has sometimes used the older full pronunciation of such words, e.g. *Comus* :

- (14) With all the grisly legi-ons that troop. 603.
- (15) Or ghastly furies' appariti-on. 641.
- (16) By a strong siding champion consci-ence. 212.

and thus Delusi-on, conditi-on, complexi-on, visi-on, contemplati-on, etc. There is no example of this in *P. L.*]

II. POETIC ELISIONS. These, which were common in Shakespeare, Milton in *P. L.* reduced, and brought under law. His rules are four.

a. The first is the rule of OPEN VOWELS. ALL OPEN VOWELS MAY BE ELIDED, WHETHER LONG, SHORT, DOUBLE, OR COMBINED; AND WHETHER BOTH THE VOWELS BE IN THE SAME WORD, OR DIVIDED BETWEEN TWO: AND *h* IS NO LETTER. Such words as the following fall under this rule:—Being, doing, flying, riot, violent, Israel, Abraham, atheist, hierarchy, variety, obsequious, vitiated, etc. and the italicized vowels in the following lines; e.g.

- (17) Above the *A*onian mount, while it pursues. i. 15.
- (18) To set himself in glory *a*bove his peers. i. 39.
- (19) Strange horror seize *thee*, and pangs unfelt before. ii. 703.
- (20) *V*irtue in her shape how lovely; saw, and pined. iv. 848.
- (21) Not in themselves all their known *v*irtue appears. ix. 110, etc.
- (22) No *i*ngrateful food: and food alike those pure. v. 407.
- (23) For still they knew, and ought to *h*ave still remembered. x. 12.
- (24) And rapture *s*o oft beheld: those heavenly shapes. ix. 1082.
- (25) Though kept from man, and worthy to *b*e admired. ix. 746.
- (26) He *e*ffected. Man he made and for him built. ix. 152.
- (27) As lords, a spacious world, to *o*ur native heaven. x. 467.
- (28) Little *i*nferiour, by my adventure hard. x. 468.
- (29) Thou didst accept them: wilt *th*ou enjoy the good. x. 758.
- (30) For God is also in sleep; and dreams advise. xii. 611.
- (31) With spattering noise rejected: oft they *a*ssayed. x. 567 and ex.  
(10, 11, 12).

## *The Verse of*

In such words as *Higher*, though, the SILENT *g* DOES NOT FORBID, e.g.

- (32) Not *higher* that hill, nor wider looking round. xi. 381.  
 (33) For he who tempts, *though* in vain, at least asperses. ix. 296.

AND *w* MAY BE DISREGARDED AS A VOWEL: as in the words *Power*, *bower*, *flower*, *shower*, *sewer*, *toward*, *follower*, *narrower*, etc., and thus the following:—

- (34) Of *sorrow* unfeigned, and humiliation meek. x. 1092.

AND WHEN *wh* IS PRONOUNCED *h*, e.g.

- (35) To *whom* thus the portress of Hell-gate replied. ii. 746.  
 (36) Two only, *who* yet by sovran gift possess. v. 366 and (148).

[† In the list of words just given there are two, *Sewer* (a drain) and *toward*, which have come down to us contracted each of them in two different ways; *Toward* either as *to'ard* (both *to'ard* and *tu'ard*) or *s'ward*, and *Sewer* seems to have had a form *shore*, which is not quite obsolete. There may be room therefore for difference of opinion as to how these words would have been pronounced by Milton, but as he spells them they belong to the class of words suffering elision by virtue of *w* considered as a vowel.]

β. The second rule, PURE R. OF UNSTRESSED VOWELS SEPARATED BY R THE FIRST MAY BE ELIDED, as in the words *Nectarous*, *weltering*, *suffering*, *glimmering*, etc., *mineral*, *general*, *several*, *every*, *artillery*, *desperate*, *deliberate*, *emperour*, *amorous*, *timorous*, *torturer*, *disfiguring*, *measuring*, etc.

- (37) Invoke thy aid to my *adventurous* song. i. 13 and (12) (31).

ALSO WHEN THE WRITTEN VOWEL IS COMPOUND, as Conqueror, labouring, savoury, neighbouring, honouring, endeavouring, etc., and thus are to be explained such verses as the following, where the elision is between two words :—

- (38) A pillar of state: deep on his front engraven. ii. 302.
- (39) By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire. xii. 203.
- (40) All judgement, whether in heaven, or earth, or hell. x. 57.
- (41) Celestial, whether among the thrones, or named. xi. 296.
- (42) Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold. ix. 429.
- (43) With spots of gold & purple, azure and green. vii. 479.
- (44) The savour of death from all things there that live. x. 269.

† NOTE ON THE WORD *SPIRIT*.

Milton uses the word spirit (and thus its derivatives) to fill indifferently one or two places of the ten in his verse (e. g. I. 17 and 101). The first vowel cannot suffer elision under the rule of pure *r*, because it is stressed. The word is an exception. It commonly suppresses one *i*, the question is which. It might be the first, for the old French *esprit*, whence our word immediately derives, has become *esprit*, and we have a form *sprite*. But Milton would have written this; and we may be confident that he suppresses the second vowel, following the Italian use, which in poetry both writes and pronounces *spirito* and *spir'to*, e. g.

Mentre che l' uno spir'to questo disse. *Inf.* v. 139.

§ There is a local burring pronunciation of *r* (heard sometimes when Americans say *American*) which, when the first of the separated vowels is stressed, disguises the second: and it has been suggested that this is the account of Milton's pronunciation of *spirit*, and even supposed that the same burr

## The Verse of

caused the contraction of words like *general*, *mineral*, towards *gener'ls*, *miner'ls*. But Milton printed *gen'ral*, and the line, ix. 1116,

tho thus of late

Columbus found the Ame-ri-can so girt,

and the consideration of Milton's choice Italian, and of the fact that in his verse *Merit*, *prosperity*, and like words never show any sign of loss of length, will be sufficient to establish the proper reading of the word *spirit* in *P. L.* and discredit this ugly suggestion altogether. See App. E.

†† The pure *r* occurring in adjectives in *able*, as *tolerable*, does not allow elision, the *ā* taking the stress-place, see under next rule : and *misery* is always three syllables.

γ. The third rule of PURE L. UNSTRESSED VOWELS BEFORE PURE I MAY BE ELIDED, as in the words *Popular*, *populous*, *articulate*, *credulous*, *groveling*, *perilous*, or even when the *i* is written double, as in *Devillish*, e. g.

(45) As one who long in *populous* city pent. ix. 445.

[† Of these words, *perilous* should not be considered as losing its *i* in the burr of the *r* (*parlous*). See above, on preceding page, §.]

THE CHIEF EXERCISE OF THIS ELISION IS IN THE TERMINATION OF WORDS, ESPECIALLY ADJECTIVES IN *ble*, the *le* being treated as pronounced *el* or *'ls*, e. g.

(46) His temple right against the temple of God. i. 402.

(47) Arraying with reflected purple and gold. iv. 596.

(48) Wandering shall in a glorious temple enshrine. xii. 334, etc.

(49) Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire. ii. 647.

(50) The portal shone, inimitable on earth. iii. 508.

(51) Son, in whose face invisible is beheld. vi. 681.

- (52) Inextricable, or strict necessity. v. 528.
- (53) To none communicable in earth or heaven. vii. 124.
- (54) Invisible else above all stars, the wheel. viii. 135.
- (55) Foe not formidable exempt from wound. ix. 486.
- (56) Inhospitable appear and desolate. xi. 306.
- (57) Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb. ii. 668.

§ Adjectives in *ble* which seem to offer an alternative elision in the middle of the word, as *miserable*, suffer the elision of the termination preferably to the other, however opposed to present taste or use this may be, e. g.

- (58) Innumerable. *As* when the potent rod. i. 338.
- (59) Of depth immeasurable. *Anon* they move. i. 549.
- (60) More tolerable: *if* there be cure or charm. ii. 460.
- (61) To be invulnerable in those bright arms. ii. 812.
- (62) Hung amiable, *Hesperian* fables true. iv. 250; cp. (72), (78), (86), (93).
- (63) Invulnerable, impenetrably armed. vi. 400.
- (64) So unimaginable, *as* hate in Heaven. vii. 54.
- (65) Innumerable; *and* this which yields or fills. vii. 88.
- (66) They viewed the vast immeasurable abyss. vii. 211.
- (67) First man, of men innumerable ordained. viii. 297.
- (68) Abominable, accurst, the house of woe. x. 465.
- (69) Scarce tolerable; *and* from the north to call. x. 654.
- (70) O miserable of happy! is this the end. x. 720.
- (71) By Death at last; *and* miserable it is. x. 981.
- (72) His heart I know, how variable *and* vain. xi. 92.
- (73) Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; *add* faith. xii. 582.
- (74) Abominable, inurterable, *and* worse. ii. 626.

§§ The evidence that this is the intended elision is as follows: that such words only occur either *First* with full value of all the syllables, and this very frequently, e. g.

- (75) Thy praises, with th' innumèrable sound. iii. 147.
- (76) Me misèrable! which way shall I fly. iv. 73.
- (77) Insupèrable height of loftiest shade. iv. 138.

## The Verse of

- (78) Rafael, the sociàble spirit that deigned. v. 221.
- (79) Innumèrable as the stars of night. v. 745.
- (80) Among innumèrable false, unmoved. v. 898.
- (81) If answeràble style I can obtain. ix. 20.
- (82) None arguing stood; innumèrable hands. vi. 508.
- (83) Things not reveal'd, which th' invisiàble King. vii. 122; cp. (97).
- (84) Of men innumèrable, there to dwell. vii. 156.
- (85) With fry innumèrable swarm, and shoals. vii. 400.
- (86) To make her amiable; on she came. viii. 484; cp. (62).
- (87) Ye cedars, with innumèrable boughs. ix. 1089.
- (88) Inseparàble, must with me along. x. 250.
- (89) Not unagreàble, to found a path. x. 256.
- (90) On all sides, from innumèrable tongues. x. 507.
- (91) More misèrable! both have sinned; but thou. x. 930.
- (92) Unutteràble, which the spirit of prayer. xi. 6.
- (93) That I should fear; nor sociably mild. xi. 234.
- (94) O misèrable mankind, to what fall. xi. 500.

And thus:—

- (95) Than mi|sèr|à|blè to' have | etèr|nal being. ii. 98.
- (96) Shoots in|v|is|à|blè vir|tue even to | the deep. iii. 586; see p. 36.
- (97) To hu|man sense | the' inv|is|à|blè | exploits. v. 565; cp. (83),  
(96), and p. 38.
- (98) Of some | thing not | unse|à|sòn|à|blè to' ask. viii. 201.

Or *Secondly*, before a vowel, as in examples (58) to (74).

Or *Thirdly*, at the end of a line, where they can make an extrametrical syllable [see p. 1, A. I.], e. g.

- (99) Fall'n Cherub! to be weak is misèrable. i. 157.

In which verse the alternative would make an inferior rhythm.

- (100) Bristled with upright beams innumèrable. vi. 82.
- (101) Where boldest, though to sight unconqueràble. vi. 118.
- (102) Of all our good, shamed, naked, misèrable. ix. 1139, etc.

which are all like this unelidable,

- (103) Obscured, where highest woods, impènètrable. ix. 1086.

†† THERE IS ONLY ONE (?) EXCEPTION, viz. the following line,

(104) Innumerable before the Almighty's throne. v. 585.

in which the word standing contracted before a consonant must suffer in the other place. See App. C.

††† NOTE ON THE WORD *EVIL*. In Shakespeare the word *evil* is sometimes contracted, and it has been asserted that this contraction was due to loss of the *v* and a pronunciation *eel*. But with regard to Milton's use, the facts are that *Evil* occurs some forty times uncontracted, and about eight times besides at the end of lines (uncontracted), while of the eight times that it suffers contraction or elision seven are before a vowel, and thus bring the word under the rule of final *l*. Besides this, Milton has written *knowledge of good and ill*, instead of *good and evil*; where the required elision is forbidden by a consonant. It will therefore be more regular to consider the following line,

(105) Both good and evil; good lost and evil got. ix. 1072.

as an exception, or an error of the pen or printer for *evil and good*, which gives a better verse.

\* And Milton did not use the *v* contraction of *Even*, *e'en*, for he prints *Ev'n*, as he does *Heav'n*; and thus *Ev'ning* and *Ev'n*, and *Seav'n* for *seven*, see next rule.

8. The fourth rule is of the elision of UNSTRESSED VOWELS BEFORE N.

E BEFORE FINAL N DOES NOT REQUIRE THE N TO BE PURE, e. g., Heaven, even, seven, etc. such words seem to follow

the analogy of the contracted (rather than elided) participle in *en*, see C. II. a. on next page.

OTHER VOWELS, AND E BEFORE N NOT FINAL, REQUIRE THE N PURE: e. g. Business, hardening, original, opening, countenance, luminous, ominous, threatening, brightening, deafening, libidinous, unreasoning, etc. And this rule governs the following examples:—

(106) Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme. i. 248.

(107) For those rebellious; here their prison ordained. i. 71.

(108) Of massy iron, or solid rock, with ease. ii. 878.

and final *en* is often thus found,

(109) Earth, and the garden of God, with cedars crowned. v. 260, etc.

(110) Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring. x. 983, etc.

THERE ARE ONLY (?) TWO EXCEPTIONS, viz. the words *prison* and *iron* are each of them contracted once before a consonant,

(111) Out of such prison, though spirits of purest light. vi. 660.

*iron*, iii. 594, might have its usual pronunciation *iern*.

\* Derivatives of *seven*, etc. follow the use of the simple words, e. g. *sevenfold*, *heavenly*.

e. THE ONLY (?) EXCEPTION TO THE ABOVE FOUR RULES OF ELISION IS THE WORD *capital*, which is contracted, ii. 924; xi. 343; and its related *Capitoline* ix. 508.

C. OF CONTRACTIONS (treated of here for convenience), these, like elisions, are either—

I. OF COMMON SPEECH. Such as the perfect tenses and participles in *ed*, which Milton often writes *t* as pronounced: and these need no comment, but note

(112) Confus'dly, and which thus must ever fight. ii. 914 (sic).

II. POETICAL CONTRACTIONS. (Such as common use has made distinct words are not reckoned, e. g. *o'er*, *e'er*.)

α. First of these the contraction OF THE PERFECT PARTICIPLE IN *en*. E. g. Fall'n, ris'n, driv'n, chos'n, giv'n, eat'n, forbid'n, etc. (see elision under *n*, and App. B).

β. Second. MILTON PREFERS THE CONTRACTED FORM OF THE TERMINATION OF THE SECOND PERSON SINGULAR OF VERBS; writing not only *Thinkst*, *seekst*, *spakst*, *sawst*, *dwellst*, etc., but *eatst*, *foundst*, *commandst*, which are ugly; and preferring *Rememberst* to *Rememb'rest*, *Openst* to *Op'nest*, as his theory compelled *Revisitst* for *Revis'test*.

γ. Third. The superlative termination similar in form to the last was not unfrequently contracted by Shakespeare. Milton does not contract this: in *P. L.* i. 202 he forbids it by printing *th'* for *the*. There is one exception in *P. R.*

(113) Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow. *P. R.* ii. 164.

δ. Fourth. The contraction of *in the*, *of the*, etc., common in Shakespeare, is not made use of in *P. L.* The exception is *th' midst*, i. 224, xi. 432, stands alone.

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#### SUMMARY OF FOREGOING RULES.

All the poetical elisions and contractions in *P. L.* may therefore be reduced to the following four rules:—

1. Open vowels (as interpreted).
2. Vowels separated by the liquids *l*, *n*, *r* (as defined).
3. Final *en*.
4. The 2nd pers. sing. of verbs.

The only exceptions are—

1. The word *capital*
  2. The word *spirit*
  3. The words *Iron*, *prison*, and *evil*, each once.
  4. *I' th' midst*.
- } See p. 24, under short i.

## CHAPTER II.

### OF VARIETY IN NUMBER OF STRESSES.

#### A. THE TYPICAL LINE HAS FIVE FULL STRESSES, c. g.

(114) Raised ímpious wár in Heáv'n, and báttle prou'd. i. 43.

† Stress has perhaps a natural tendency to be weaker in the alternate places, like music in common time, and typically the stronger stresses would be in the odd places, see (125), (126), (127). But in a five-foot metre (and this is one of its advantages) it is evident that the odd foot will contradict this and set up varieties: and all possible combinations of these are used.

B. LINES WITH ONLY FOUR STRESSES. It is common for one stress in the line to be absent, or to be so much weaker than the others that it may be considered as failing. In the following examples the two syllables of the foot from which the stress is absent are marked thus 00. This does not imply that these syllables are always classically short in quantity, though they are almost always light.

I. THE OMITTED STRESS MAY BE THE FIRST, c. g. (132), (133), and

(115) And Yn luxúrious cities, w hére the nóise. i. 498.

(116) As fróm the center thrice to th' utmost pole. i. 74.

† Note, the effect of this is always to weaken the line. It is therefore rare, and it is only in long poems that it can be used at all freely with good effect.

†† Initial weak feet are, like the examples above, almost always made up of two monosyllables, and a slight accent will be given in reading to the first of them, so that the foot is really inverted; see p. 15 on inversions, and on inversions of the first foot. Thus in ex. 115 a slight stress falls on the conjunction and none on the preposition. As to whether the prepositions had more stress value in Milton's time, so as to forbid this rhythm, see App. E.

††† The conjunction *and* often occurs in stress-places in Milton's verse, where stressing it would make the verse ridiculous. See *Par. Reg.* lines 99-109.

## II. THE STRESS MAY BE OMITTED IN THE SECOND PLACE, e. g.

(117) Served only to discover sights of woe. i. 64.

(118) Still glorious, before whom awake I stood. viii. 464.

† This last is perhaps an example of the RULE OF THE RECESSION, OR RETREATING OF ACCENT, i. e. when a disyllable accented on the last was followed immediately by another strongly accented syllable, the accent of the former was sometimes in speaking shifted back, and before whom may have been read *bé-for* whom. But it is better to consider that there is no recession of accent in *Paradise Lost*. See for exceptions App. D.

This rhythm may give very beautiful verses, e. g.

(119) Nor served it to relax their *serried* files. vi. 599.

(120) Our little life | Is *rounded* with a sleep. Shakespeare.

## III. OR THE STRESS MAY FAIL IN THE THIRD PLACE, e. g.

(121) A dúngeon hórríble on álł sídes róund. i. 61.

† The failure of the middle stress divides the line into two equal parts; which rhythm was much used by Pope for the exhibition of antithesis, etc. Thousands of monotonous lines since run in this manner,

(122) The friár hóoded	And the	mónarch crówned.	<i>Ess. on M.</i>
„ cóbbler ápron	„ „	párson gówñ.	<i>ib.</i>
„ ánts' repúblíc	„ „	réalm of béés.	<i>ib.</i>
„ rápt'rons móment	„ „	plácíd hóur.	<i>Byron.</i>
„ fówl doméstic	„ „	houśehold dóg.	<i>Wordsw.</i>

## IV. OR THE FOURTH PLACE MAY FAIL. This is very common, e. g.

(123) Sole reigning, holds the tyránný of heaven. i. 124.

## V. OR THE FIFTH PLACE MAY BE WEAK; BUT HERE THE CLOSE OF THE LINE WILL GIVE A CONVENTIONAL STRESS, e. g.

(124) No líght; but ráther dárkness vísíblè. i. 63.

## C. SOME LINES HAVE ONLY THREE FULL STRESSES, e. g.

(125) His mínísters of véngéáñce ánd pursúit. i. 170.

(126) The sójóúrnérs of Góshén whó behéld. 309.\*

(127) Transfix ús tó the bóttóm óf this gulf. 329.

In many cases a weak place in such lines is balanced or accounted for by strengthening (even to stressing) the normally unstressed syllable, which is attached to the next following stress. See again App. D.

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\* This line exhibits a long vowel (whó) in the stress-place refusing to carry any kind of emphasis.

## CHAPTER III.

### OF INVERSION OF RHYTHM.

BLANK VERSE IS TYPICALLY IN RISING RHYTHM; i. e. the stress is regularly on the even syllables, as in ex. (114).

BUT THE RHYTHM IS SOMETIMES FALLING; I. E. THE STRESS MAY BE shifted on to the odd syllable in any place in the line. It is then described as INVERTED.

† OF INVERTED STRESS. INVERSIONS OF STRESS in all places except the first disturb the rhythm so as to call attention to the word which carries the irregular stress: they are therefore used primarily in relation to the sense (see the following examples (a)). But in a long poem like *P. L.* the more common inversions soon become as familiar to the ear as is the typical rhythm; they then fall into the condition of the inversion of the first foot, and enliven the rhythm without taxing the sense (see the following examples (b)).

†† Inversion is most common in the 1st foot, next in the 3rd and 4th, very rare in 2nd, and most rare in 5th.

I. INVERSIONS OF THE FIRST FOOT. This inversion does not affect the sense, but it freshens the rhythm, e. g.

(128) *Régions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace.* i. 65.

† As a general rule, when the first foot is weak [see p. 12 B. I.] it will strengthen itself by a slight conventional inversion in spite of the sense, e. g.

(129) *We shall be free.* i. 259 and (146), (147).

†† This behaviour of the initial foot accounts also for all inversions which follow periods in the sense.

## II. INVERSION OF THE SECOND STRESS, e. g.

- (130) (a) A mind *not* to be changed by time or place. i. 253.  
 (131) (a) Me, me *only*, just object of his ire. x. 936.  
 (132) To the *garden* of bliss, thy seat prepared. viii. 299.  
 (133) In the *visions* of God. It was a hill. xi. 377. See p. 36.

## III. INVERSION OF THIRD STRESS, e. g.

- (134) (a) For one restraint, *lords* of the world besides. i. 32.  
 (135) (b) Which, tasted, works *knowledge* of good and evil. vii. 543.

## IV. INVERSION OF FOURTH STRESS, e. g.

- (136) (a) Illumine; what is low, *raise* and support. i. 23.  
 (137) (a) As when two polar winds, *blowing* adverse. x. 289.  
 (138) Before thy fellows, *ambitious* to win. vi. 160.  
 (139) (b) From noon, and gentle airs, *due* at their hour. x. 93.

V. INVERTED FIFTH STRESS. This is very rare, and does not so much emphasize the word which carries it, as it imparts strangeness to the sentence, well used in the following examples:—

- (140) Beyond all past example and future. x. 840.  
 (141) Which of us who beholds the bright *surface*. vi. 472.

† Some poets say that this rhythm is impossible, and was not intended; and would accent future and surface on the last; and so they must accent *prostrate* in

- (142) Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim *prostrate*. vi. 841.

though Milton always uses *future* and *prostrate*, and there is said to be no other example of *surface* in literature. If it be argued that these words, being compounds or Latin, do not forbid the distortion, it may be that they were chosen to give such readers an option; and this would cover

- (143) Spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphed. x. 186.

for this verb is accented either way. See *Comus* 974. But 141 is a very beautiful inversion, and 142 is descriptive. It would have been strange if Milton had never used this rhythm, for there are several ways by which it is naturally arrived at (e. g. see *pitons* p. 83), especially from our reading classical iambic verse.

†† The above inversions, as all other variations of rhythm, owe their value to the presupposed metrical type from which they vary: but they must not be disguised by reading a conventional stress in the regular place. The rhythm is determined by them, and the metre is not falsified for two reasons; first, because the interruption is not long enough, the verse immediately returning to the original rhythm; the second, because a majority of verses enforce the impression of the type.

#### VI. THERE MAY BE MORE THAN ONE INVERSION IN THE SAME LINE.

α. EXAMPLES OF INVERSION OF 1ST AND 2ND. See p. 35.

(144) (a) *Univèrsal reproach, far worse to bear.* vi. 34.

(145) *By the wàters of life, where'er they sat.* xi. 79.

β. OF 3RD AND 4TH.

(146) (a) *As a despite dóne agàinst the Most High.* vi. 906.

γ. OF 2ND AND 4TH.

(147) (b) *In their tríples degrees; régions to which.* v. 750.

In these last two examples the weak first foot is also inverted. See above, I. † on p. 15.

## NOTE.

There are two points to observe in Milton's manner of using his rules of elision. *First*, that the rules being in every case only permissive, he indicates no rule for their use; their application is arbitrary. We read on the same page:—

(148) To whom Mi|chael thus, | he al|-so moved, | replied. xi. 453.

(149) To whom | thus Mi|cha-el, | Death thou | hast seen. 466.

Again, after

The im|age of | a brute,

we have

(150) Th' image | of God | in man, | crea|ted once. xi. 508 and cp. vii. 527.

Again, the substantive *Being* suffers elision,

(151) That gave | thee being, | still shades | thee, and | protects. ix. 266.

while the less important participle has sometimes its full value,

(152) His vi|olence | thou fearest | not, be|-ing such. ix. 282, etc. etc.

*Second*, that Milton came to scan his verses one way, and read them another. The line quoted above (150), and add IV. 805, must be read, *The im|age of Gód | like The sá|vour of Death |* (44), and *A pí|llar of state |* (38).

Again, the line

(153) Of rain|bows and | starry eyes. | The wa|ters thus, must be read,

Of raín|bows and stár|ry eýes. | The wá|ters thus. vii. 446.

In example (96) there scanned, we must read

Shóots in|vísible | vírtue | éven to | the deep,

compare also what is said on *Samson*, pp. 43, 44.

We may say generally that Milton's system in *Par. Lost* was an attempt to keep blank verse decasyllabic by means of fictions : or (if we suppose that he admitted the principle of *metrical equivalence*,—i. e. the principle by which a place, which can be occupied by a long syllable, may admit two short ones in its stead, see App. F), it may be said that he formulated the common conditions of those syllables which experience showed were oftenest and best used for trisyllabic places ; and then worked within the line which he had thus drawn.

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#### ON THE CAESURA OR BREAK IN THE VERSE.

Like the classic metres which have the caesura fixed by rule, a blank verse in English tends to divide itself into two balancing parts ; and a natural rhythmical division may generally be felt in lines which contain no grammatical pause. But where there is any grammatical pause it is that which determines the break.

Now since blank verse is a system of short sentences of all possible variety of length, fitted within the frame of a five-foot metre, the tendency of the break towards the middle part of the verse is easily lost ; and when the verse is handled in a masterly manner the break may occur well in any part of the line. It is necessary, therefore, to discard the word caesura, with its precise signification, and call this division in blank verse THE BREAK.

In the following illustrations consider the verse as of ten

syllabic units, and the break to occur between the two components of ten which are given to represent the verse ; thus,—

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
(154) Of man's first dis-o-be-dience, and the fruit

is a 7 + 3 line : i.e. the break occurs between the 7th and 8th syllables : seven before it and three after.

Here is an example of the relation between sentences and metre in an elaborate passage. The following sentences :—

*** Harmonious numbers ;	5 syllables.
As the wakeful bird sings darkling,	8 "
And in shadiest covert hid,	7 "
Tunes her nocturnal note.	6 "
Thus with the year seasons return ;	8 "
But not to me returns day,	7 "
Or the sweet approach of even or morn.	9 "

make the verses,

(155) Harmonious numbers ; as the wakeful bird	[5 + 5]
(156) Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid,	[8 + 7]
(157) Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year	[6 + 4]
(158) Seasons return ; but not to me returns	[4 + 6]
(159) Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn. iii. 38 sq.	[1 + 9]

The above and the following will give examples of all the

#### NINE SINGLE BREAKS :

(160) Join voices all ye living souls : ye Birds. v. 197.	[8 + 2]
*** Firm they might have stood	
(161) Yet fell : remember and fear to transgress. vi-end.	[2 + 8]
*** Such as in their souls infixed	
(162) Plagues : they astonished all resistance lost. vi. 838.	[1 + 9]
(163) And bush with frizzled hair implicit : Last	[9 + 1]
Rose as in dance the stately trees, etc. vii. 323.	

Observe in the last three examples how the break emphasizes the sense

† The early defenders of *Par. Lost*, when still fewer than fit, were scandalized by the verse 1 + 9. This should be remembered in possibly analogous cases by those who now sit in their critical seats.

# DOUBLE BREAKS.

THERE ARE SOMETIMES TWO OR MORE BREAKS IN A LINE: the frequency of these, with the severity of the breaks, is a distinction of Milton's verse. The following are some examples. It is not always possible to say whether a verse has one or two breaks; readers would differ.

- (164) Hail Son of God, Saviour of men! Thy name. iii. 412. [4 + 4 + 2]
- (165) Instruct me, for thou knowst; Thou from the first. i. 19. [3 + 3 + 4]
- (166) Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb. i. 167. [3 + 4 + 3]
- (167) Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest. iii. 10. [2 + 5 + 3]
- Ex. (128) is [5 + 3 + 2]

These are indications of the varieties, which are numberless; for when the metrical components of a verse are parts of sentences the other parts of which go to the composition of the next verses before and after, the breaks of such verses cannot be considered apart: and were these varieties exhausted, the variations of these as affected by the position of weak or inverted stresses would remain to reckon, before the changes possible in the mere formal rhythm, apart from all that is introduced by the language, were enumerated. There are few who will pursue this path any further.

P.S.—It should be added that any consideration of Milton's rhythm or versification in *P. L.* should exclude those passages where he follows the Authorised Version of the Bible—especially where the speaker is

the Deity. Reverence for the text has made him insert it almost unaltered, the lines are often as bad as they can be, and one of them does not scan. Their justification does not lie in prosody. The occasional intrusion of a foreign force refractory to the main current has the effect of powerfully enhancing the value of the normal. Dante got this effect by the use of Latin quotations in his carefully versified poem; and I think that Milton's liberties might have been more powerful if he could have used the Vulgate instead of the vernacular version.

# ON THE PROSODY OF *PARADISE REGAINED* AND *SAMSON AGONISTES*

*Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* were written some time after the completion of *Paradise Lost*, and the examination of their metre and rhythm is therefore of great interest, as it must divulge to us whether Milton was satisfied with the rules by which he had bound himself in his long poem; and, if he was not, in what direction he was inclined to alter them. Such an inquiry will show that Milton did not think it worth while to keep strictly to his laws of 'elision,' but that he approved of the great rhythmical experiments which he had made, and extended these.

In examining these two poems, I shall arrange the matter in two chapters; in the first I will give all the examples which show departure from the rules of prosody tabulated from *Paradise Lost*—this must be somewhat tedious, but it is necessary, and fortunately not a very long affair—; in the second I will give an account of the metrical and rhythmical system of *Samson*, which contains Milton's most elaborate and artificial versification.

## CHAPTER I.

ON THE RELAXATION WHICH IS FOUND IN *Paradise Regained*  
AND *Samson Agonistes* OF THE LAWS OF 'ELISION' SO  
CALLED IN *Paradise Lost*.

THERE are altogether only about a score of exceptions to the old rules: a number so small that they might be attributed to a less careful practice: but this supposition is untenable in itself, and is not supported by the character of the exceptions. None of the following lines would have been admitted into *Paradise Lost*:

- (1) The worst of all indignities yet on me. *S. A.* 1341.
- (2) The rest was magnanimity to remit. 1470.
- (3) And he in that calamitous prison left. 1480.
- (4) Thy politic maxims or that cumbersome. *P. R.* iii. 400.
- (5) With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts. *S. A.* 524.
- (6) She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting. 997.
- (7) But providence or instinct of nature seems. 1545.
- (8) And all the flourishing works of peace destroy. *P. R.* iii. 80.
- (9) Wilt thou, then, serve the Philistines with that gift. *S. A.* 577.
- (10) Soaked in his enemies blood; and from the stream. 1726.
- (11) Present in temples at idolatrous rites. 1378.
- (12) Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine. 1670.
- (13) The close of all my miseries and the balm. 651.

Of the above, the first four examples are all of them instances of short *i* being admitted into the fiction of elision before *r*, as in the word *capital*, which was the only exception in *Paradise Lost* (see p. 10, *e*, and note also that the word *spirit*, see p. 5, might be reckoned in this class of words): and *capital* itself occurs contracted again in *Samson*, lines 394 and 1225. In the following line, moreover, the *i* elision is made between two

words, just as in *Paradise Lost* liquid terminations were 'elided' before initial vowels (see p. 5, exx. 38-44 and p. 6, exx. 46, et seq.),

(14) In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds. S. A. 122.

The examples 5 to 9 are a further extension; the short *i* standing before other consonants than *r*: and in 9, where it stands before two consonants, the contraction of the syllable is so harsh as to make one doubt if it be intended.

The examples 10 to 12 are all from *Samson*, and they look at first as if the vowel and liquid elision theory had been quite discarded. But this conclusion would not be justified, for if exx. 5 and 10 be taken together, all may be explained by supposing that Milton now recognized the claim of *m* to be a liquid admitting elision; and that the word *idolary*, which alone remains to be accounted for, is an exception. It has been suggested to me that that word had very probably acquired among the Puritans a fixed and recognized pronunciation which Milton would have had pleasure in adopting. But, in any case, these examples point to the conclusion that Milton was less strict with himself, and they reduce the condition of his trisyllabic feet very near to the common use.

Example 13 contradicts Milton's consistent pronunciation of *misery*. Elsewhere he always insists on all the three syllables, which is the more expressive pronunciation of the word.

[The first of the examples given above is quite exceptional in Milton's verse, for it has an uncertainty both of rhythm and scansion. Besides that suggested, there are two other possible explanations of its prosody. The first of these is that the line

has an extrametrical syllable at the end, and an inverted fifth foot, thus—

The worst | of all | indig|nities | yet on (me).

This is good rhythm, and best supported by the sense; for the stress is awkward on *on*, and is not really wanted on *me*. The whole passage is powerful, and well carries this unusual rhythm, which was suggested to me independently by two readers. It must be remembered also that it is not unlikely that the existence of an alternative rhythm may be in favour of an unusual one (see above, p. 16). The second alternative is the rhythm which is most likely to be given to it—

The worst | of all | indig|nities | yet ón (me).

As stated before, the assertion of the enclitic accent here seems unworthy, but there are these lines in favour of it—

(15) That fault I take not ón me, but transfer. 241.

(16) Or rather flight, no great advantage ón me. 1118.

The reader may choose for himself.]

The following lines are examples of an initial *y* being treated as a vowel, as was allowed with *w* (see p. 4, ex. 35, etc.):

(17) Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon. 1171.

(18) Some way or other yet further to afflict thee. 1252.

(19) Whose offspring in his territory yet serve. P. R. iii. 375.

In the last of these lines it has been suggested that Milton intended an 'elision' of the *o* of *territory*. But it is not his practice to neglect the length of a vowel—(comp. his respect for the *ā* of *miserable*, etc., p. 7, etc.)—and it cannot be supposed here.

There are left only two lines which exhibit novelties: the first is—

(20) To some|thing ex|traór|dina|ry my thoughts | 1383.

This is the evident rhythm of the line, and if it were the scansion it would be unique ; but since the last edition of this book I have been persuaded that the most reasonable fiction is the elision of the *æ* in extraordinary, which gives

To something ex|traordi|nary | my thoughts

that is an inversion in the third and fourth places (see p. 17) : but the verse though thus reduced to rule seems exceptional in rhythm, and there can be little doubt that the sense provoked it. It may at first seem childish to assert that 'something extraordinary' in the sense determined something extraordinary in the prosody : yet to deny this requires the acceptance of an unlikely alternative ; we must believe that at the crisis in the poem where Samson declares that he feels within him the divine impulse, which leads to the catastrophe of the tragedy, there occurs, by accident, an unusual movement in the author's verse. This improbability is much increased when we consider how Milton's rhythm is always ready to follow his thought ; a habit with him so essential to his style and so carefully trained, that a motive, like that which this passage carries, could hardly have been passed over without some exceptional treatment.

The other and last novelty is the blank verse—

(21) Out, out, | Hyæ(na) ! | theæ are | thy won|ted arts. 748.

and here apparently is the extrametrical syllable returned to its place (see p. 2, II, and Appendix A) ; at least so the rhythm will read, however the prosody be explained. But the system of prosody in *Samson* plainly forbids extrametrical syllables in the midst of the line, and there is certainly no other example.

Unless, therefore, we suppose that there is here such an extra-metrical syllable admitted by oversight, or allowed as unlikely to introduce any uncertainty into the prosody (which it does not), we must receive one or other of the following scansiones to justify the verse ; either

Out out | Hyæna | thése are | thy won|ted arts,

i. e., with 2nd and 3rd feet inverted, and 'elision' of the first syllable of Hyæna, or

Out out | Hyæ|na these | are thy won|ted arts,

with 'elision' of *y* before *w* in the fourth foot. The extreme lengths to which such fictions of scansion are pushed in *Samson* independently of the rhythm (see later on, p. 44) would admit the first of these explanations. But whatever scansion be taken it is of no importance, the line is not in the condition of ex. 1, in which both rhythm and scansion are in doubt, for the rhythm here is unmistakable, the doubt is only how it is intended to be justified in prosody.

The above are, I believe, all the exceptions in these poems to the laws which govern the trisyllabic places in *Paradise Lost*. The reader may therefore draw his own conclusions. I will state my own, which have changed somewhat since I came to tabulate them.

I conclude that after writing *Paradise Lost*, Milton—

First, extended his rule of liquids to include *m*.

Secondly, that as he used *cap'tal* and *spir't* in *Paradise Lost*, he now generally regarded a short *i* before pure *t* as specially short and elidable, and even once allowed this 'elision' between separate words.

Thirdly, that he admitted the short *i* occurring before other consonants into trisyllabic places.

Fourthly, that he treated initial *y* as a vowel.

Lastly, if these extensions of his rules be admitted, there are only two exceptions, one the use of idolatrous and idolatry, of which an explanation is suggested (and see later, p. 45): the other the probable occurrence of an extrametrical syllable within the line.

To these should be added the exception, ex. 113, on p. 11.

On the other hand it may be said with truth, that, taking Milton's poems together, they do not differ much on these points from the poems of other good writers; that in all the best blank verse the trisyllabic feet are made up almost exclusively of open vowels, or vowels separated by liquids; and that, after these, the most frequent condition is that of short *i*. But if my statements are true, I think it impossible to doubt that in *Paradise Lost* Milton purposely excluded all trisyllabic feet but those made by open vowels and three liquids, and that he afterwards relaxed this rule to admit *m* and short *i*: and if he did not consciously exclude other short vowels—a supposition which his early verse does not support—his practice must then have been guided solely by his ear, in which case it is still more worthy of attention.

Here are a few examples of the licences which Milton rejected—

Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream. *Ant. Cleop. i. 4.*  
 To try thy eloquence, now 'tis time: dispatch. *iii. 10.*  
 Even in the visions of her eloquent sleep. *Shelley. Islam.*  
 Of flowering parasites, did spring love to dress. *Shelley. Islam.*

## CHAPTER II.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE METRICAL SYSTEM OF *Samson*  
*Agonistes*.

THE opinions which critics have ventured on the versification of the choruses in *Samson Agonistes* would be sufficient proof that they had met with something not well understood, even if they had never misinterpreted the rhythm. It is not less than an absurdity to suppose that Milton's carefully-made verse could be unmusical: on the other hand it is easy to see how the far-sought effects of the greatest master in any art may lie beyond the general taste. In rhythm this is specially the case; while almost everybody has a natural liking for the common fundamental rhythms, it is only after long familiarity with them that the ear grows dissatisfied, and wishes them to be broken; and there are very few persons indeed who take such a natural delight in rhythm for its own sake, that they can follow with pleasure a learned rhythm which is very rich in variety, and the beauty of which is its perpetual freedom to obey the sense and diction. And this also is true, that some knowledge of the structure, or laws which govern such rhythms is necessary to most persons before they will receive them as melodious; and they will accept or reject a rhythm to which they are unaccustomed, according as they can or cannot perceive, or think they perceive, its structure. This attitude towards beauty of any kind is not the best, but I am not concerned with that, or its cause; my undertaking, however, in this particular case, is to indulge it, and to put the reader into such a comfortable and assured state of mind with regard

to the structure of the verse in *Samson*, as will enable him to encounter its rhythms with a good conscience. The rhythms themselves I do not intend to discuss, that is, I shall not try to throw light on such questions, as why such a rhythm is beautiful in itself, or why it follows such another. But if I enable the reader to scan the verses, and, if he choose, count and name the metrical units, I may expect that he will then feel himself free to admire the rhythms. If he still cannot do so, that may be my fault or his, but it cannot be Milton's.

The present chapter will therefore be an account of the elemental structure of the verse of *Samson Agonistes*. I shall begin by getting rid of what I believe to be the chief source of misunderstanding.

No one has ever found any difficulty in the metre or rhythm of the poems *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*: they are 'universally crowned with highest praises,' and are held to be masterpieces of musical writing. In these poems, setting aside their irregular openings, there are two kinds of line, one the eight-syllable line with rising stress (so-called iambic), the other the seven-syllable line with falling stress (so-called trochaic), this latter being exactly like the former with the first syllable omitted. But if we examine a passage from one of these poems, we shall find that there is also a third kind of line, which intermediates between the other two types, and that this is made by the simple device of inverting the first foot of the eight-syllable line; thus,—

And oft, | as if | her head | she bowed,  
 Stooping | through a | fleecy | cloud.  
 Oft, on | a plat | of rising ground,  
 I hear | the far | off curfew sound,

*The Verse of*

Over | some wide- | watered | shore,  
Swinging | slow with | sullen | roar.

Of these six lines the first and fourth are regular eight-syllable lines with rising stress ('iambic'), and the second, fifth, and sixth are regular seven-syllable lines with falling stress ('trochaic'); but the third is an eight-syllable line with the first stress inverted, or falling, and it begins as if it were going to be a seven-syllable line (trochaic) throughout, and it reads equally well (for the two things are identical) as a line of falling stress (trochaic) with a trisyllabic foot (so-called dactyl) in the first place. Its structure is

Oft' on | a plat | of rísing gróund,

but by the inversion of the first foot it reads as if it were scanned thus

Oft' on a | plat of | rísing | gróund.

Such an example as the above offers no difficulty, and it has, as I have said, never given rise to any difference of opinion as to its metrical device; but it is clear that if there was an optional elision in the first foot, it would not only be possible to take it in these two ways, but impossible to say which was the better explanation. If, for instance, we substitute such a disyllable as *Softly* for the words *Oft on*, thus

Softly a plat of rising ground,

it is clear that, according as we admit or refuse an elision of the open *y* before the *a*, we have a seven-syllable line with falling stress throughout, or an eight-syllable line of rising stress with the first foot inverted; that is either

Softly a | plat of | rising | ground,

or

Softly | a plat | of rísing ground,

I wish the reader to perceive that a verse in this condition is under no uncertainty of rhythm : here is an actual example,

Warble his native woodnotes wild.

there is no doubt how the verse is to be read and stressed, but there are two possible ways of explaining its metrical structure : and it is merely a matter of convenience in classification which one we take.

Now this condition occurs in *Samson* complicated by these further conditions, that the inversions are not confined to the first foot of the line, and the lines are of various lengths : and Milton has purposely used these liberties together, on account of their rhythmical resources, in order to introduce what are called dactylic (that is true trisyllabic verse-) rhythms into his verse, which is all the while composed strictly of disyllabic feet.

In such verse as I have quoted from *Il Penseroso*, where the eight-syllable and seven-syllable systems are mixed together, it is the method of some metrists to regard all the lines, whether rising or falling, as being composed of the same metrical units, and differing only by the insertion or not of an unaccented initial syllable. This way is very simple, and if rhythmic stress in poetry be regarded as equivalent to accent in musical rhythm, and the metrical units be counted as measured bars or half-bars, it may be used as an explanation. In Chaucer's ten-syllable verse the first syllable is sometimes omitted (just as it is in *L' Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*) : and those who prefer to look at the matter in this way, will thus explain the odd-syllable verse of *Samson*. But just in proportion as the line is invaded by inversions, the explanation ceases to be satisfactory,

and I shall in this chapter always distinguish falling rhythms ('trochaic') from rising ('iambic') rhythms with inversions. The distinction is of more importance in analysis than the theoretic likeness.

Now in *Samson Agonistes*, if all the lines of falling rhythm (so-called trochaic, or lines which lack the initial syllable) be recognized and separated from the rest,—and there are only 19 in all the 1758,—it will be found that the whole of the poem, with those exceptions, is composed in rising rhythm, of regular disyllabic feet (so-called iambs) with free liberty of inversions, and weak places, and 'elisions,' and extrametrical syllables at the end of the line, all such as we found in *Paradise Lost*. The whole of the 'dactylic' and 'trochaic' effects are got by the placing of the inversions, elisions, etc.; and where the 'iambic' system seems entirely to disappear, it is maintained as a fictitious structure and scansion, not intended to be read, but to be imagined as a time-beat on which the free rhythm is, so to speak, syncopated, as a melody.

Firstly, these are the 19 lines in falling rhythm: they are all of them in the choric or lyric verse:—

- (1) Lét us | nóe break | ín u|pón him. 116.
- (2) Thát he|róick | thát re|nówned. 125.
- (3) Ór the | sphére of | fórtune | ráises. 172.
- (4) Ó thát | Tórmént | shóuld not | bé con|fined. 606.
- (5) Tó the | bódý's | wóunds and | sóres. 607.
- (6) Bút must | sécret | pássage | find. 610.
- (7) Ás on | éntails | jóints and | límbs. 614.
- (8) Ás a | línger|ing dísease. 618.
- (9) Líke a | státely | shíp. 714.
- (10) Ánd célléstíal | vígour | árméd. 1280.
- (11) Gréar a|móng the | héathen | róund. 1430
- (12) Ín the | cámp of | Dán. 1436.

- (13) While their | héarts were | jócund | ánd sub|líme. 1668.  
 (14) Like that | sélf-be|góttén | bírd. 1699.  
 (15) In the A|rābian | wóods em|bóst. 1700.  
 (16) Thát no | sécond | knóws nor | thírd. 1701.  
 (17) All' is | bést though | wé oft | dóubt. 1745.  
 (18) What the' un|séarcha|ble dis|póse. 1746.  
 (19) Oft' he | séems to | híde his | fáce. 1749.

Of the above lines 4 and 13 are like Chancer's nine-syllable lines; that is, if an initial syllable were added, they would be ordinary ten-syllable 'blank' verses. In 5 and 12, if contraction were allowed of the words *to the* and *in the*, these two lines could be reckoned as in rising rhythm; while in 15 and 18, if the marked 'elisions' be neglected, the lines become regular eight-syllable lines with an inversion of the first foot. But of these number 12 is the only line in which the falling ('trochaic') rhythm can be doubted as the poet's intention.

Having dismissed these lines, the whole of the rest of the poem is to be explained as in rising disyllabic (iambic) metres, broken by inversions, etc.

And first I will take all the instances of the most peculiar rhythm which is obtained by these inversions, that is when the first two feet of the line are inverted: here are the lines, eleven in number:—

- (20) Írre|cóvera|bly dárk, | tótal | eclíspse. 81.

In this verse there is also inversion of the fourth foot.

- (21) Ór by e|vāsions | thy críme | unc|verst móre. 842.  
 (22) Írre|s|stí|ble Sám|son? whóm | unárméd. 126.  
 (23) Thát invínci|ble Sám|son, fár | renówned. 347.

(and compare with these two last

- (24) Sámson | should be | brought fórth | to shów | the péo|ple). 1605.)  
 (25) Úni|vérsal|ly crówned | with high|est prái|ses). 175.

- (26) Fór his | péople | of óld; | what hín|ders nów. 1533.  
 (27) Ó how | cómely | it is, | and hów | reví(ving). 1268.  
 (28) Tó the | spírits | of júst | men lóng | opprésed. 1269.  
 (29) Púts in|vinci|ble might | 1271.  
 (30) Ánd with | blín|dness | intér|nal strúck | 1690.

and add to these examples 83 and 89 *q. v.*

I will say about each one of these lines what is to be urged against this view of their metrical construction: but first, in favour of the explanation that they are all instances of inversion of the first two feet, I will give examples of similar rhythm from *Paradise Lost* and *Regained*.

- (31) Úni|vérsal | reproách, | far worse | to bear. *P. L.* vi. 34.  
 (32) Bý the | wáters | of lífe, | where'er | they sat. xi. 79.  
 (33) Ín the | bósom | of blíss, | and líght | of líght. *R.* iv. 597.  
 (34) Tó the | gárden | of blíss, | their seat | prepared. *L.* viii. 299.  
 (35) Áfter | fórtý | days fás|ting had | remained. *R.* ii. 243.  
 (36) Thróugh the | ínfi|nité host: | nor less | for that. *L.* v. 874.  
 (37) Shóots in|vísi|ble vír|tue éven to | the deep. *L.* iii. 586.

This has, like 20, an inversion also of the fourth foot. And add examples 133 and 147 on pp. 16 and 17 and these less marked lines—

- (38) Ádam, | well may | we la|bour stíll | to dress. ix. 205.  
 (39) Lábour, | as to | debar | us when | we need. 236.  
 (40) Góing | ínto | such dan|ger as | thou saidst. 1157.

Of these ten lines from the epic verse, most of the examples are indubitable, and prove that the rhythm is one which we should expect to find; while the extreme pathos of it in ex. 20, where it is impossible to make any other rhythm, the fact that in 22, 23, and 24 it is used as expressive of the bond-bursting Samson, the absolute necessity for allowing it in 30, and the appearance of it in those weaker examples connected with labour and danger, 38, 39, and 40, all together make a strong

case for admitting the explanation to cover all the examples given.

But it may have been observed that in three of these 21 lines the words *irresistible* or *invincible* occur, and since 'elision' of the short *i* is allowed in *Samson* (see p. 24), it might be suspected here as a preferable explanation. And these examples, i. e. 22, 23, and 29, might, if there were no considerations to determine otherwise, be all scanned as odd-syllable lines containing elision of the short *i*; and thus

Ir|resis|cible Sam|son whom | unarmed.  
That | invin|cible Sam|son far | renowned,

would be Chaucerian nine-syllable lines, just like examples 4 and 13 above from the chorus. But this, as I said before, makes no difference to the rhythm: the chief objection to such an explanation is that it does not explain all the lines. It is true that examples 25, 26, 27, 28, 34, 36, and 37 are in the same condition with these other four, for these lines also all contain a possible elision or contraction: but the contraction of *universally* in 25 would be unparalleled, and examples 20, 21, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 35, which are all decided cases, would still be left: so that it is more convenient to group them together as above.

But no metrical explanation which does not falsify the rhythm is in itself objectionable; what is wrong is to read these lines *Irrecoverably*, *Irresistible*, *That invincible* or *cible*, *Ununiversally*, *O how comely*, *Puts in-vincible*, *Ununiversal reproach*, *Shoots invisible*. It would not be worth while to mention such barbarous distortions, if some of them had not been actually proposed and received by scholars. In face of their authority the student may wish to know how Milton uses these words in

other places, and looking up in the concordance all the passages where they occur, I find for *Irresistible*, which seems chosen as a word that enforced its accent, this single line

(41) Of union irresistible, moved on. P. L. vi. 63.

As for *invincible*, the word occurs in five other places and begins the line in every one but the following—

(42) Thy temperance, invincible besides. R. ii. 408.

*Universal* occurs in twenty-one other places, and always with its ordinary accent, and again seems as if it was chosen because it could not be misread.

*Invisible* occurs in all fourteen times. Its position in eleven of these makes any other than its proper pronunciation impossible. One of the remaining three is example 37 above; the other two are—

(43) To human sense th' invisible exploits. P. L. v. 465.

(44) Things not | revealed, | which th' in|visi|ble king. vii. 122.

Both these lines are printed with the elision of *the* in the first edition\*, which excludes the contraction *invis'ble*, and in example 43 gives *invisible*. No 44, if it stood alone, would sustain the Chaucerian *invis'ble*; but there is no doubt that an inversion of the fourth foot is here intended to enforce the mystery of the sense. Compare ex. 72, p. 59.

*Infinite* occurs in all twenty-three times. In twenty-one its common accentuation is necessary; of the other two, one is

(45) Infinite wrath, and infinite despair. iv. 74.

which contains an inversion of the first foot, as example 36, which is the other case, does of the second.

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\* I use the 'facsimile reproduction' of Elliot Stock, 1877.

It would be difficult to find words the stress of which is better fitted to secure the inversion of the rhythm, or the usage of which in the poem is better established. I have also in one or two cases pointed out the relation which their rhythmical effect bears to the sense. The meaning in 22 and 23 must strike every one. In examples 32, 33, and 34 it seems to introduce a lyrical wave, the contradiction of which to the epic flow of the verse may suggest a remoteness of beauty very like the idea in the words; and we have the very same condition of things in ex. 133, p. 16. But, not to say anything which might appear fanciful, I leave this suggestion to the reader, and refer him generally to the chorus on p. 41.

The next peculiarity of rhythm which I will take is the twelve-syllable verse, or line with six stresses. These verses occur in the lyrical parts only of *Samson*: there are some twenty-six in all. It is usually considered that this line (sometimes called an Alexandrine) must have a break or caesura in the middle, between the sixth and seventh syllables. It is best known in this form, and the break is commonly so well marked, that in free unrhymed verse it is indistinguishable from a pair of six-syllable lines. The characteristic of Milton's twelve-syllable line is his neglect of this break, and he makes a verse which has a strong unity in itself, and no tendency to break up. In fact, though he allows himself the same liberty of caesura or break in this as he does in his ten-syllable verse (see p. 19), yet his 'Alexandrine' is almost more coherent, as if it was composed expressly to counteract its tendency to divide into two. And here I should think that there was probably another stumbling-block for the readers of *Samson*, if

it were not for the great popularity of Milton's *Nativity Ode*, where the twelve-syllable lines that close the stanzas are made in the same way; and, with other examples of his early verse, show that he always took the same view of the rhythm of this line. Here are a few well-known lines from the Ode :—

- (46) And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.
- (47) Swindges the scaly horror of his folded tail.
- (48) The sable-stoled sorcerers bear his worshipt ark.
- (49) She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.
- (50) While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.

In *Samson* about nine of these lines are 6 + 6, with the common break, which is however often weak or disguised : four are 7 + 5 (see ex. 71) : three are 8 + 4 : one is 4 + 5 + 3 : one is 5 + 7 : one is 5 + 3 + 4 : and seven are continuous lines without any break. These, which are characteristic and show the sweep of the rhythm, are here given :

- (51) Or groveling, soiled their crested helmets in the dust. 141.
- (52) To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen. 169.
- (53) To death's benumbing opium as my only cure. 630.
- (54) Left me all helpless with the' irreparable loss. 644.
- (55) And condemnation of the' ingrateful multitude. 696.
- (56) Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil. 1035.
- (57) This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest. 1297.

This last line might be taken as an example of 4 + 4 + 4.

It should be remarked on these twelve-syllable lines that some of them may be reduced to ten-syllable lines, by reckoning the last two syllables as extrametrical (see p. 2, ex. 2).

- (58) Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery. 131. (6 + 6.)
- (59) Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless. 648. (7 + 5.)
- (60) So deal not with this once thy glorious cham(pion),
- (61) The image of thy strength and mighty minister. 706. (6 + 6.)

Such an explanation would be quite out of the question if the

ten-syllable verse were judged by that of *Paradise Lost*, though a few lines might seem to support it; but in *Samson* Milton has used heavier endings: here are a few,—

- (62) Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me. 374.
- (63) Samson of all thy sufferings think the heaviest. 445.
- (64) Private respects must yield with grave authority. 867.
- (65) Besides how vile, contemptible, ridiculous. 1361.
- (66) No better way I saw than by importuning. 797.
- (67) Of brazen shield and spear, the hammered cuirass. 132.
- (68) My son is rather slaying them: that outcry. 1527.

and thus *therefore, silence, deliverance, diminution, submission*, etc. The lines last quoted, and ex. 60 (see ex. 16, p. 3) must all be taken as ten-syllable lines with extrametrical endings, but it is of no consequence how (58) (59) (61) are explained, although they are almost certainly meant for twelve-syllable verses.

The reader might now take the opening of the first chorus, and see how the various lines which have been already described are put together, and how the verse, with the exception of the lines given on pp. 34, 35, is all resolved into disyllabic rising rhythm.

- (69) This, this | is he; | softly | awhile,

an eight-syllable line, with third foot inverted; the sibilants are hushing.

- (1) Let us | not break | in upon him:

a perfect four-foot line in falling rhythm (see p. 34).

- (70) O change | beyond | report, | thought, or | belief

a ten-syllable line, metre reflective: the fourth foot inverted for wonder.

(71) See how | he lies | at ran|dom, care|lessly | diffus'd,  
the first twelve-syllable line in the poem, 7 + 5. In describing great Samson stretched on the bank, it describes itself

(72) With lang|uish'd head | unpropt,  
a six-syllable line, its shortness is the want of support.

(73) As one | past hope, | aban-(don'd),

(74) And by | himself | given o-(ver);

two six-syllable lines, with extrametrical final syllables suggestive of negligence.

(75) In sla|vish ha|bit, ill-fit-|ted weeds

an eight-syllable line with elision in third foot: see above, p. 25, ex. 14.

(76) O'erworn | and soil'd;

a four-syllable line; its shortness and simple diction are the poverty of the subject.

(77) Or do | my eyes | misre|present? | Can this | be he,

a twelve-syllable line (8 + 4); the length of the verse suggests the crowding of new ideas.

(2) That he|roick, | that re|now'ned

a seven-syllable line, the rhythm heralding

(22) Ire|s|sti|ble Sam|son? whom, | unarmed,

a ten-syllable line, with first two feet inverted, descriptive of Samson's violence.

(78) No strength | of man, | nor fier|cest wild | beast, could | with-stand;

a heavy twelve-syllable line, descriptive of Samson's strength.

(79) Who tore | the li|on, as | the li|on tears | the kid;

same with break disguised. Observe how the first half of the line is more powerful than the second.

(80) Ran on | embat|clad ar|mies clad | in i(ron);  
a ten-syllable line, with final extrametrical syllable. The ease of the metre after two Alexandrines is Samson's successful rush.

(81) And, wea|ponless | himself,  
a six-syllable line; its shortness is Samson's nakedness and singlehandedness.

(58) Made arms | rid|cūloūs, | úselēss | thē fōr|gēř  
a twelve-syllable line, with fourth foot inverted, and weak ending to each half, descriptive of the failure of the preparations.

This will serve for an example. The relation of the form of the verse to the sense is not intended to be taken exactly; it is a matter of feeling between the two, and is misrepresented by any definition. Poetry would be absurd which was always mimicking the diction or the sense; but that is a different thing from matter and form being in a live harmonious relation. The above passage happens to be rich in opportunities for descriptive rhythm, and it was necessary to the purpose of this chapter to draw attention to Milton's observation of these, because this often explains what has been censured as harsh or careless irregularity in the verse. Nor have I much indulged my fancy; it will have struck many readers that in the line (ex. 75) where Milton puts his hero in rags, he must have been conscious that he was putting his verse into rags; for he always rejected such a garment as he here weaves as unworthy of his Muse.

Lastly, I will indicate a few examples of the free rhythms which are carried by the regular disyllabic structure\*

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\* The sign *o* is used as on pp. 12-14 to mark the unaccented light syllables; these are not all classically short.

Ex. 15 above reads,

In the Ä|rablän | wóods em|bóstr.

(82) Prison within | prison In|separably | dark. 153, 4.

which is made of two six-syllable lines, the first of which has its first and last feet inverted, the second a weak middle foot.

(83) But the heart | of the fól | . 298.

which is also a six-syllable line, with its first two feet inverted, and may be added to examples 20-30 above, pp. 35, 36.

(84) With touch ethéräl öf Héavén's fűřý ród. 549.

a ten-syllable line, which reads thus by means of three elisions and one weak place.

(85) My | grie|fs nřf önlý | pain mř ás ä | lűgřřing dűs|ease. 617, 8.

a six-syllable line, with extrametrical syllable at the end, followed by a falling seven-syllable line, ex. 8, above.

(86) Maný äre the | sayings öf the | wise. 652.

which is an eight-syllable line, with its inverted first foot containing an elision, and with a weak third foot.

(87) Těmperst thy | próvidence | thróugh his | shórt cóurse. 670.

thus reads an ordinary ten-syllable line with first and fourth inverted.

(88) Thěrefore God's universal law. 1053.

begins a passage of seven short lines every one of which has the first foot inverted, so that the whole reads as verse in falling rhythm, interspersed with 'dactyls.'

(12) Drűnk with i|döl|atry | drűnk with | wine. 1670.

this 'dactylic' verse scans thus

Drűnk with | i|döl|atry drűnk | with wine,

with elision in the third foot, see p. 25. The concordance gives

eight references for *idolarry*, *idolatrours*, etc., and the word has always its common accentuation; but in the two lines quoted from *Samson* (p. 24, ex. 11, 12) the third syllable is elided or contracted. There can be no doubt of this; but there is a third line, commencing also with two 'dactyls,'

(89) By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine. 443,

and, given the contraction of *idolatrours* in the two other places, as Shakespeare has it,

But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy. *All's W.* i. 1.

this would scan most simply with a common inversion of first foot,

By the | idōl|atrous rout | amidst | their wine.

but in the first edition it is printed with elision of *the*, which gives

By th' i|dōlā|trous rout | amidst | their wine,

and puts it among the examples of verses which invert the first two feet. I had before supposed that the elision of *the* was a mistake of the printer or his reader, but this scansion, though further fetched, is more like the rhythm: either is a fiction, and neither contradicts the rhythm.

In recognizing the fictitious 'dactylic' character of some of these lines (compare also the three 'dactyls' in ex. 58), the reader must not believe, as he will sometimes find it asserted, that true 'dactylic' verse, or verse made of true trisyllabic units, was practically unknown in Milton's time. It was quite common: indeed common is the right term for it, because the greater poets thought it beneath their style. Milton was therefore not inventing anything new or unheard, but seeking

## 46     *The Verse of Samson Agonistes*

rather to make a good use of natural English stress rhythms, without falling into their singsong, or setting all his verse to dance. And if it is now clear to the reader by what means he did this, there is nothing left which needs further explanation. Some criticism of Milton's method will be found in Appendix F.

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NOTE.—What I have said on p. 43 about the line 'in slavish habit,' etc., being an unworthy garment may be obscure to some readers. The passage in Mr. Stone's essay (p. 145), in which he distinguishes the pronunciation of Plautus from that of Virgil, will explain exactly what is intended.

## APPENDIX A

### THE EXTRAMETRICAL SYLLABLE.

How does an extrametrical syllable, occurring in the midst of a line, differ from the supernumerary syllable of a common trisyllabic foot? For instance, how do these lines differ?

(1) To quench the drouth of Phœ-(bus): which as they taste. Ex. 4.

(2) To set himself in glo-ry above his peers. Ex. 18, p. 3.

The answer is that in the second the extra syllable is made rhythmical by its brevity, in the first it is made rhythmical by there being a pause after it.

This rhythmical explanation accounts for the prosody, and for the fact that an extrametrical syllable is often followed by an inversion.

The extrametrical syllable proper is of frequent occurrence in Shakespearian dialogue. Where a line is divided between two speakers, the second speaker often disregards the last syllable of the first speaker, and treats it as extrametrical. This was used by Shakespeare among his devices,—which increased as he perfected his art,—to prevent such a line falling pat, and to avoid the effect of the second speaker having his answer conditioned for him by the first; who being in possession of the line, ceded, as it were, only as much as he chose. Our ear has a romantic and masculine objection to any such

appearance of the verse overruling the matter: and the value of a reply is actually impaired, if it seems to be led up to, and prearranged; and so *stichomythia*, as it is called, in which the speaker is bound to fill and not exceed the line, requires the art to be free from all realism whatever\*; a condition not often presented by our drama.

But if a line, which has in the middle of it an extrametrical syllable followed by a pause, pleases the ear, it is plain that this extrametrical syllable will have a way of coming in some-

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\* It is difficult to use the word realism without causing some misunderstanding: and for the sake of clearness I will try to explain what I conceive to be the place of realism in the best art. To put the matter in the simplest diagrammatic form, every work of art is a combination of *nature* and *imagination*. If it were all nature, it would not be art; if it were all imagination, it would be unintelligible,—and this last because art is man's creation, and man is a part of nature. We may therefore roughly figure any work of art as being compounded of 50 parts imagination and 50 nature, or 10 of one and 90 of the other, and so on: and (supposing equal intellectual excellence and aesthetic beauty) the best of two works of art would be the one which had most imagination and least nature. Classical art is that which, like the most characteristic Greek work, fixes certain natural limits, and does not transgress them. It is poised at a certain imaginative height within touch of common life, and it does not deviate very far either above or below this constant elevation. Romantic art (and Greek gives some examples of it) refuses these 'reasonable' limits, and leaving the imagination free to transcend them, is in danger of losing touch with nature. Thence it follows that in romantic art (where the percentage, so to speak, of the natural may be reduced to a very small proportion) it becomes necessary for the natural to be reinforced, and this can only be done by realism far stronger than classical art would bear; which not being at so great a height is more easily degraded and brought down: and thus realism becomes the companion of imagination. This, I believe, gives a true and intelligible account of one of the main distinctions between classical and romantic, as we use those ill-defined terms.

times when it is not expected, and, in bad writers, where it is not wanted.

Also, it may not be always easy to determine whether such a syllable is truly extrametrical or not, because there may be all gradations, and even a doubt whether there is a pause intended. Nor does the existence of a grammatical pause always decide the question: the lines in which Milton has made an elision across a stop, are good examples of the rhythmical conditions which lie between the extrametrical syllable proper, and simple elision. See exx. 10, 11, 12, on p. 2, and 58, 59, 65, 69, on p. 7. The theory of trisyllabic feet best suits these places: but as a question of Miltonic prosody they are all examples of 'elision.' In cases where there is doubt it is better to regard the syllable as extrametrical: the test is this, that if it is extrametrical, it does not signify to the ear whether it is long or short, though it is better for being rather long; whereas in a trisyllabic foot the quantity of the syllable makes all the difference, for it must be light, and the lighter the better.

On the other hand it is not essential that a strong grammatical pause or an inversion should follow an extrametrical syllable in a line, though this is its typical condition: the syllable itself may be introduced to make the verse to pause. The frequent occurrence of these extrametrical syllables in Shakespeare, whose later verse is sometimes restless with them,—and who may be said to have exceeded the bounds of propriety in this, as in other matters, with perfect felicity,—has given rise to mistakes\*; for this extra syllable is often

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\* Any study of Shakespeare's versification must first of all exclude from consideration the plays which he did not write. His work should then

confounded with the condition of a true trisyllabic foot, and imagined to be a bad attempt at that. Some modern writers have thus used it with a sort of affectation of antique negligence; though it never has been, nor can ever be more wretchedly abused than it was by the second-rate Elizabethans.

## APPENDIX B

### ON ELISION.

CONCERNING the use of the term Elision in this tract: it has been taken by some that I meant that the elided syllable should be 'cut out' of the pronunciation: but I chose the term, which is in common use, because I wished not to imply any theory of prosody, as to how the supernumerary syllables were to be accounted for in rhythm. I did not think that there could be any doubt as to whether they should be pronounced. That Milton regarded his open vowels as 'elided,' like open vowels in Latin, can hardly be doubted: that is, he intended that they should not count in the scansion: yet though he printed *Th' Almighty*, etc., it cannot be supposed that he wished it to be so pronounced\*. In English the open vowel is always pronounced: but the actual phonetic conditions of open vowels are difficult, and that of vowels separated by 'liquids' is still more so. However slightly we may pronounce the *e* in *The*

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be classified in periods or styles, and the classes examined separately. A collection of instances from all his poetry can lead to no result, because his late verse is written on a different system from his early verse.

\* On the question of the spelling and printing of the first edition of *Paradise Lost*, see Appendix E.

*Almighty*, it is always heard : but what of the *e* in *wondering* and '*wonderous*'? or is that more sounded than the unwritten vowel before the *i* in *warbling*? That Milton recognized the vowel character of the semivowels is certain from his manner of writing words in which they occur : for though such forms as *assembl'd*, *resembl'st* (which should be read *resemblst* in ex. 10, p. 2), *stumbld*, *trembl'd*, *troubl'd*, *trampld*, etc., were no doubt so written to avoid the pronunciation *assem-bl'd*, *resembl'st*, etc., and to ensure the pronunciation *assembeld*, *stumbeld*, etc.; yet this does not account for such printings as *Imbattld* for *Imbattl'd*, *op'n'd*, and *op'nd* for *open'd*, *reck'n'st* for *reckon'st*, *brok'n* for *broken*, etc., in verses where such words have their full syllabic value. And no one can read the first edition of *Paradise Lost* without seeing how difficult it is to draw a line where theoretic elision, if once admitted for open vowels, should end.

The true metrical theory of these syllables must depend not upon their spelling, but upon their speech-condition : I could not thoroughly enter into that, and so I chose a term which should imply nothing, because it could not be taken literally. Milton's practice is somewhat inconsistent or arbitrary, and may be open to various interpretations : I have not observed that it differs much from Chaucer's, and it is common to all our poetry since.

As for open vowels, when two vowels which require different positions of the mouth are spoken consecutively without interruption of sound, a third sound must occur between them, made while the mouth is passing from one position to the other. It is a necessary physical condition in all languages, and it

must have been present in Latin, and it does not prevent two short vowels in juxtaposition from being one of the shortest possible conditions of a disyllable. But some authorities assert that in English this vowel glide is not pure, but has, in passing between extreme positions [e. g. from oo [u] to ee [i] or from ee to oo], a consonantal quality of *w* or *y* added to it, and that for this reason, true elision between such vowels is impossible in English. On account of the great variety and composite character of the English vowel-sounds, and the fact that our modern spelling prevents us from distinguishing sounds to the eye by the ordinary means which were invented for that purpose, I have avoided this question, and used *elision* as a term of no definite meaning. I also use the term *liquid*, as it is found in old grammars, for the four sounds *r*, *l*, *n*, and *m*.

## APPENDIX C

### ADJECTIVES IN *able*.

It seemed necessary to prove at length that Milton treated the *a* in these words as long, and that in the trisyllabic places in which they occur, it is the *bl* and not the *a* which is short or 'elided,' because he is now often misread by those who are more familiar with the poetry of this century, as a few examples may explain. Shelley, who generally follows Milton's use in this particular, has the *a* short here and there, e. g.

(1) The plectrum struck the chords—unconquerably. *H. Merc.* lxxi. 5.

(2) Like earth's own voice lifted unconquerably. *Is.* ix. 3. 5.

(3) The tremulous stars sparkled unfathomably. *Witch.* xlix.

The following are from Rossetti :

(4) With sweet confederate music *fávoräblè*.

(5) Their refuse maidenhood *abómínäblè*.

And Rossetti does not stop here ; he has

(6) The inmost incense of his *sánctüärý*.

(7) This harp still makes my name its *vóluntäry*.

To such words as these last, i. e. four-syllable words accented on the first, and having a long vowel in the penultimate, Milton always gives their full value, as they are heard in modern American speech : and when they occupy only three places in the verse the last syllable is elided before a vowel. There is one exception, the shortened *a* in *luminäry*, vii. 385.

Ellis represents Chaucer's *able* as *aabl-* or *aab'l* ; thus

(8) And ful plee'zaunt' and aa'miaa'bl- of poort'e. *Prol.* 138.

and these words were thus accentuated by Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton, and down to our time, the *ä* gradually lightening. It seems now a question whether they have so changed their speech-accent, as to justify a departure from tradition in higher poetry, in face of the indisputable permanence of our classical verse. See further remarks in App. H, p. 83.

## APPENDIX D

### ON RECESSION OF ACCENT.

RECESSION of accent, which was defined on p. 13, is not now heard. I have been told that it lingers in Ireland in the common speech in which it must have originated, and that Roman Catholics there will still talk of *éxtreme unctiön*, just as Milton

has *éxtreme shift* in Comus: also that they do not say Sir Jóhn Róbinson, but Sir-john Róbinson; in the fashion in which, I suppose, our names Sinclair, Silliger, and St. John (Sínjun) arose: which tempts me to quote from Milton's sonnets,

(1) Thy age like ours, O soul of Sir John Cheek.

As regards Shakespeare, the industry of Dr. Alexander Schmidt has put this question clear of conjecture. The first article in the appendix to his *Shakespeare Lexicon* is on the 'Changeable accent of disyllabic adjectives and participles.' His rule is this: that *Disyllabic adjectives and participles which are accented on the last, shift their accent to their first syllable when occurring before nouns which are accented on the first; provided that their own last syllable occur in the arsis: i. e. off the verse stress.* The only fault to find with this definition \* is that it confines recession of accent to adjectives and participles, and that it requires the determining (following) word to be a noun, which it is true that it is in all his instances; but I should be inclined to consider this unessential, and treat the recession as being due entirely to collision of accents. I do not see that it has anything to do with the sense, or with the adjective being in the predicate or not, as implied by Dr. Schmidt's remarks.

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\* It might seem simpler to suppose that these words have their accent determined merely by their place in the verse: but they must of course have acquired their shifting pronunciation before the poet could have relied on their obeying the verse stress; and if, as seems probable, this came about from the perpetual contact of their final accent with the initial accent of nouns, then their position before the noun is their typical condition. But two things follow; first, that once in this unstable condition they would shift their accent under less provocation than what first displaced it, and, second, that other disyllables would imitate them.

I will give from his examples enough to convince the reader of the real existence of this practice.

- (2) He is *complète* in feature and in mind. *Genr.* ii. 4. 73.
- (3) Can pierce a *cómpete* bos(om). Why I desire thee. *Meas.* i. 3. 3.
- (4) A maid of grace and *cómpete* majesty. *L. L. L.* i. 1. 137.
- (5) Than all the *cómpete* armour that thou wear'st. *Rich.* 3rd, iv. 4. 189.
- (6) Though time seem so *adverse* and means unfit. *All's W.* v. 1. 26.
- (7) Thy *adverse* party is thy advocate. *Sonn.* 35. 10.
- (8) Therefore my verse to constancy *confined*. *Sonn.* 105. 7.
- (9) Supposed as forfeit to a *cónfined* doom. *Sonn.* 107. 4.
- (10) Have you *conspired*, have you with these *contrived*. *Mid.* iii. 2. 196.
- (11) To do no *contrived* *murd(er)*: I lack iniquity. *Oth.* i. 2. 3.
- (12) So then I am not lame, poor, nor despised. *Sonn.* 37. 9.
- (13) The pangs of *déspised* love, the laws delay. *Ham.* iii. 1. 72.
- (14) And not the puddle in thy sea *dispérsed*. *Lucr.* 658.
- (15) The *dispérsed* air, who, holding Lucrece' life. *Lucr.* 1805.
- (16) And make *distínt* the very breach, whereout. *Tro.* iv. 5. 245.
- (17) To offend, and judge, are *distínt* offices. *Mer.* ii. 9. 61.
- (18) With *distínt* breath and *cónsigned* kisses to them. *Tro.* iv. 4. 47.
- (19) This fellow is *distráct* and so am I. *Err.* iv. 3. 42.
- (20) Their *distráct* parcels in combined sums. *Compl.* 231 (? author).
- (21) O royal knavery! an *exáct* command. *Ham.* v. 2. 19.
- (22) To set the *éxact* wealth of all our states. *1st Hen.* 4th, iv. 1. 46.
- (23) I have with *éxact* view perused thee, Hector. *Tro.* iv. 5. 232.
- (24) Let their exhaled unwholesome breaths make sick. *Lucr.* 779.
- (25) And be no more an *éxhaled* meteor. *1st Hen.* 4th, v. 1. 19.
- (26) To work my mind, when body's work's *éxpired*. *Sonn.* 27. 4.
- (27) An *éxpired* date, cancelled ere well begun. *Lucr.* 26.
- (28) To the contrary I have *express* commandment. *Wint.* ii. 2. 8.
- (29) As bid me tell my tale in *éxpress* words. *John.* iv. 2. 234.
- (30) Savage, *extréme*, rude, cruel, not to trust. *Sonn.* 129. 4.
- (31) And *extréme* fear can neither fight nor fly. *Lucr.* 230.
- (32) But qualify the fire's *extréme* rage. *Gent.* ii. 7. 22.
- (33) The *extréme* parts of time *extremely* forms. *L. L. L.* v. 2. 750.
- (34) Tempering *extremities* with *extréme* sweet. *Rom. Chor.*
- (35) To some forlorn and naked hermitage. *L. L. L.* v. 2. 805.

- (36) And from the *forlorn* world his visage hide. *Sonn.* 33. 7.  
 (37) Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and rough. *Ven.* 237.  
 (38) His means of death, his *obscure* funeral. *Ham.* iv. 5. 213.  
 (39) In so profound abyss I throw all care. *Sonn.* 112. 9.  
 (40) There's matter in these sighs, these *profound* heaves. *Ham.* iv. 1. 1.  
 (41) Open the door, *secure*, fool-hardy king. *R.* 2nd, v. 3. 43.  
 (42) Upon my *secure* hour thy uncle stole. *Ham.* i. 5. 61.  
 (43) To lip a wanton in a *secure* couch. *Oth.* iv. 1. 72.  
 (44) Which knows no pity, but is still severe. *Ven.* 1000.  
 (45) And let go by the actor). O just but *severe* law. *Mess.* ii. 2. 41.  
 (46) His love *sincere*, his thoughts immaculate. *Gent.* ii. 7. 76.  
 (47) Sir, in good sooth, in *sincere* verity. *Leas.* ii. 2. 111.  
 (48) Neither *supreme*, how soon confusion. *Cor.* iii. 1. 110.  
 (49) The life of purity, the *supreme* fair. *Lucr.* 780.  
 (50) But as we, under heaven, are *supreme* head. *John.* iii. 1. 155.

He also draws instances from the apocrypha of *bénign*, *corrupt*, *remiss*; and brings under his rule the well-known instances of *exiled* and *humane*; (which we may here dismiss, for Milton uses *exiled* where it will take either accent, and distinguishes *human* and *humane* as we do;) he also quotes

- (51) Have you done yet? Alack our *serene* moon. *Ant.* iii. 13. 153.  
 to which I would add  
 (52) Open their *congealed* mouths and bleed afresh. *Rich.* 3rd, i. 2. 56.  
 (53) My *concealed* lady to our cancelled love. *Rom.* iii. 3. 98.  
 (54) Of murderous lech(ers): and in the *mature* time. *Leas.* iv. 6. 282.  
 and these prepositions

- (55) That *thereby* beauty's rose might never die. *Sonn.* i. 2.  
 (56) All ignorant that soul that sees thee *without* wonder. *L. L. L.* iv. 2. 117.

This is one of the lines in which Nathaniel 'missed the accent': and *thereon* in the same play, iv. 3. 298, and

- (57) Who, if it wink, shall *thereon* fall and die. *Lucr.* 1139.

Schmidt concludes his essay with instancing the similarly shifting accent of disyllables compounded of *un*, as *unbacked*, *unbid*, *unblown*, *unborn*, *unbound*, *unchaste*, etc. (and I should class with these the compounds of *mis*-), which may be considered as parallel cases; but these disyllables are made up of a positive and a negative syllable, both of which carry some stress in ordinary speech, with either one or other insisted on according to the sense of the speaker; and they may thus easily take either accent in verse, and they differ in this from such words as *divine*, *secure*, *profound*, etc., which are, or have become, irresoluble units with one single well-marked stress. I therefore class these apart, and shall consider them separately.

This being the use of Shakespeare, we have to determine whether it gives the explanation of any of the verses in *Paradise Lost*. There can, I think, be no doubt that in Milton's early poems instances of recession do occur: of the prepositions there are these:—

(58) The brood of Folly *without* father bred. *Pens.* 2.

(59) Here be *without* duck or nod. *Com.* 960.

and of the adjectives and participles these:—

(60) About the *supreme* Throne. *Time*, 17.

(61) In regions mild of calm and *sérène* air. *Com.* 4.

(62) And He, the *Supreme* Good, to whom all things ill. 217.

(63) Not any boast of skill, but *éxtreme* shift. 272.

(64) She, that hath thar, is clad in *complete* steel. 421.

(65) Wherewith she freezed her foes to *cóngealed* stone. 449.

(66) The *divine* property of her first being. 469.

(67) The *sublime* notion, and high mystery. 785.

I should say that the above are all genuine cases; and yet most of these verses, if they occurred in *Paradise Lost*, (and a few similar ones do occur,) I should explain differently.

The matter stands thus: in all Milton's verse there is a frequent occurrence of the following rhythm, that is, a foot of two unstressed light syllables preceding a foot composed of two heavy syllables, as in these lines from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*,

(68) The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn.

(69) Before milkwhite, now purple with love's wound.

(70) Love takes the meaning in love's conference.

It is common in Milton's early verse, which is much influenced by the verse of Shakespeare's first style; and he always made use of it. Whatever the account of it is, it is pleasant to the ear even in the smoothest verse, and is so, no doubt, by a kind of compensation in it. In typical cases there is no possibility of stress in the first short foot, and the first heavy syllable of the next foot seems to carry what has been omitted, with an accentuation bearing relation to the sense. Instances occur everywhere in Milton.

It will readily be seen that this is a condition of things which must very often do away with the necessity for supposing recession of accent; for if a passage occurs in which recession of accent might be supposed, it is merely in this usual condition of rhythm, and may be in order without it: and further, the more the verse frees itself, by assertion of stress, from the common smooth flow of alternate accents, and exhibits variety of rhythm, as Milton's late verse does,—the more will the ear allow this, or any other recognized irregularity, to intrude itself without support from the sense; and the less will it be prepared or disposed to correct such weak places by the conventional

metric stress: or, to put the same thing in another way, there is a very strong reason why Milton should have excluded the licence of recession of accent from *Paradise Lost*; because the uncertainty which it introduces as to whether a syllable should be stressed or not, and the tendency which it has to make the verse smooth at all cost, would infect his inversions with uncertainty, and on these the character of his rhythm in a great measure depended. If we add to this consideration the rarity of possible instances in all *Paradise Lost*, *Regained*, and *Samson*,—putting the question of prepositions aside,—the evidence that Milton did actually intend to renounce this licence is very convincing. I have noted only these:

(71) Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons. i. 406.

(72) And sat as Princes; whom the Supreme King. i. 735.

A doubtful example, for with the same sense we have the same rhythm as *suprême* would make, in *P. L.* i. 40, etc.

(73) Encamp their legions; or with obscure wing. ii. 132.

(74) Our Supreme Foe in time may much remit. ii. 210.

this may be a common inversion of first foot.

(75) In confused march forlorn, the adventurous bands. ii. 615.

this is better with the ordinary accent descriptive of confusion.

(76) Through the pure marble air his oblique way. iii. 564.

The words *complete*, *extreme*, *serene*, *sublime*, together occur in all twenty-four times in *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson*; and are always accented on the last. Each of these words occurs once in *Comus*, and there suffers recession of accent (see exx. above 61 et seq.): and it is worth observing that in *Par. Lost*, *divine Stemblance*, ix. 606, and *suprême Kingdom*, vi. 814, are divided between two lines.

The word *adverse* cannot be reckoned, for though Milton uses both accents, the choice seems arbitrary (see ii. 77): and we still accent the word either way. It is like the adjectives compounded with *un*; and of these I have remarked only *unknown* as being in a double condition.

- (77) Or *unknown* regions, what remains to him  
But *unknown* dangers. ii. 443. 4.

*Uncomh* is always accented on the first: and for *prostrate*, which might seem from ex. 142, p. 16, to have a shifting accent, see the remarks there.

If the reader will now observe that all the six examples (seven if *unknown* be counted) of recession or doubtful recession occur in the first three books of *Paradise Lost*, he will, I think, agree that Milton purposely excluded recession from *Paradise Lost*, as he did extrametrical syllables within the line, for fear of introducing uncertainty into his rhythms, but that the necessity of avoiding it altogether was not at first fully realized, or that his old habit was not quite conquered. The only fallacy here must lie in the premises, and it is possible enough that I may have overlooked some examples.

As Milton has twice in his earlier poems shifted the accent of *wishous*, it is necessary to examine the prepositions, and although the greater number of the following verses give far better rhythm to us without recession, and seem constructed to emphasize the sense, yet I think it not improbable (considering exx. 58, 59 above) that they may most of them have been read with recession in his time, whether he meant it or no. The following lists of examples, though not exhaustive, may I think be considered as very fully representative:—

- (78) That comes to all; but torture *without* end. P. L. i. 67.
- (79) Must exercise us *without* hope of end. ii. 89.
- (80) Illimitable ocean *without* bound. ii. 892.
- (81) Loud as from numbers *without* number, sweet. iii. 346.
- (82) In whose conspicuous countenance, *without* cloud. iii. 385.
- (83) He views in breadth, and, *without* longer pause. iii. 561.
- (84) Him first, Him last, Him midst, and *without* end. v. 165.
- (85) One kingdom, joy and union *without* end. vii. 161.
- (86) Variety *without* end: but of the tree. vii. 542.
- (87) Smooth sliding *without* step, last led me up. viii. 302.
- (88) Us happy, and *without* love no happiness. viii. 621.
- (89) And forty days Elijah, *without* food. P. R. i. 353.
- (90) From national obstriction, *without* taint. Sam. 312.

There are like instances of other such parts of speech, as in the following verses :

- (91) Thus high uplifted *beyond* hope, aspires. P. L. ii. 7.
- (92) Their seasons: *among* these the seat of men. vii. 623.
- (93) And not molest us; *unless* we ourselves. viii. 186.
- (94) Still glorious, *before* whom awake I stood. viii. 464.
- (95) The stairs were such as *whereon* Jacob saw. iii. 510.
- (96) From the Asian kings, and Parthian *among* these. P. R. iv. 73.

The following verses, in which recession is possible but evidently not intended, may be compared :—

- (97) Alone, and *without* guide, half-lost, I seek. P. L. ii. 975.
- (98) Love *without* end, and *without* measure grace. iii. 142.
- (99) And be thyself Mán *among* mén on earth. iii. 283.
- (100) Flowers of all hue, and *without* thörn the rose. iv. 256.
- (101) Thy goodness *beyond* thought, and power divine. v. 159.
- (102) In mystic dance nót *without* sòng, resound. v. 178.
- (103) Ordained *without* redemption, *without* end. v. 615.
- (104) As a despíte dóné *against* the Móst Hígh. See p. 17.
- (105) Successful *beyond* hope, to lead ye forth. x. 463.

I do not expect every one to agree with me in the grouping of these examples, but if, as I think, recession must have been meant to be excluded from some, it could scarcely have been

excluded if it had been admitted in the other places. The only lines which seem to me probable cases are the *unless* and *whereon* exx., 93 and 95.

But even if Milton, as I suppose, banished recession of accent from his later prosody, it did not disappear from English poetry. There are strangely many examples of it in Shelley, whose verse, since it is lacking in that quality which critics call roughness in Milton, readily betrays irregularities which it is not constructed to carry. In *The Witch of Atlas* is this line,

(106) A haven, *béneath* whose translucent floor. *xlix.*

Beneath was here, I suppose, sounded *bénneath*, as in ex. 118 on p. 13 before would be *béffor*, if that line be admitted as an instance of recession.

The word *sérene*, which Shelley usually stressed as we do, removes its accent away to the first syllable, when followed by a contiguous stress.

(107) Or *sérene* morning air, and far beyond. *Epips.* 438.

(108) Through which his soul, like Vesper's *sérene* beam. *Athan.* i. 61.

(109) And profoundest midnight shroud the *sérene* lights of heaven.

There is an example of recession in the first stanza of *The Skylark*,

(110) In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

The word *divine* is in the same condition,

(111) And lofty hopes of *divine* liberty. *Alastor*, 159.

(112) Bore to thy honour through the *divine* gloom. *Prom.* iii. 3.

(113) The herd went wandering o'er the *divine* mead. *Hymn-Merc.* lxxxvi.

And thus *intense*, *distinct*, *supreme*, *extreme*.

(114) By sightless lightning?—th' *intense* atom glows. *Ad.* xx.

(115) The *distinct* valley and the vacant woods. *Alast.* 195.

- (116) More distinct than the thunder's wildest roar. *Spect. H.* 46.  
 (117) God is one supreme goodness, one pure essence. *Cald.* i.  
           115, etc.  
 (118) Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last. *Ad.* vi.  
 (119) His extreme way to her dim dwellingplace. *Ad.* viii.  
 (120) Scarce visible from extreme loveliness. *Epips.* 104, etc.

Thus also *antique*, and *obscene*.

The new Concordance to Shelley's poems, by Mr. F. S. Ellis, published this year \* by Mr. Quaritch, will give ample evidence of Shelley's practice: I observe in it that the line,

- (121) Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks. *Alast.* 551.

is given with *abrupt* accented on the first syllable. The line with the usual accentuation has a fine Miltonic rhythm, in correspondence with the sense; and it is an interesting confirmation of what I said above of the character of Shelley's rhythms, that the compiler of the dictionary, whose acquaintance with Shelley's verse must be of a most exceptional kind, should have considered that rhythm impossible.

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NOTE.—The above remarks on recession were written before I had seen Dr. Schmidt's excursus: to which a friend called my attention. I have rearranged my notes to give prominence to his work, which I have inserted, to the readers' advantage, in place of my own examination of Shakespeare's practice.

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## APPENDIX E

## PRONUNCIATION IN MILTON.

I AVOIDED the question of pronunciation in my tract, because I am not qualified to give any opinion on the subject, and for whatever I know I have to thank those who know more. The matter too is complicated by the peculiar spelling which Milton used in *Paradise Lost*; and since that is unfortunately not preserved in later editions, I could not conveniently use it. With regard to this spelling, I was myself familiar only with the common texts, and wrote from my knowledge of them: but when I undertook my task I read through the poem in a facsimile of the first edition, and came to the following conclusions.

First, that—excluding words, the spelling of which is fanciful or antique, such as *highth* for *height*, and *thir* for *their*—the main object of the unusual spelling is to ensure the verse being read rightly. Where a word is shortened, if there is choice or doubt as to which syllable should suffer, one is generally indicated in the spelling; as much for the sake of whole verses as of words. In the appendix on elision examples will be found of words, and on pages 10 and 38 of lines, which illustrate this. Also the elision of the definite article is intended to be always shown.

Next that, as might be expected, Milton's blindness did not allow such work as this to be carried out thoroughly; so that the spelling is not consistent, nor free from mistakes which might be corrected with certainty and advantage.

Also that Milton did not aim at consistency. It seems as if, in cases where he rejected the ordinary spelling as misleading, he did not care to fix another, for he has represented the same word in different ways. And in this, as in other respects, he was a true Elizabethan.

Lastly, that the spelling shows that Milton took a phonetic view of prosody ; and that, though his system may be considered as a literary modification of Chaucer's, yet the modification was made on phonetic principles, with definite purpose in choice and exclusion.

Though I have not examined the book so well as to be in a position to deny that a study of Milton's spelling in the first edition might eliminate the errors, and non-essential variations, and leave a residue which would exhibit a system not at first apparent, yet I did not myself discern it, and I found nothing to change the conclusions at which I had already arrived, except in the particular last mentioned, namely that the 'liquid elisions' were adopted by Milton to the exclusion of others, not only because they pleased his ear, but because he knew why they did so. See the Appendix on Elision.

A phonetic examination of English verse, much as it is to be desired, I never undertook : and as Milton's method is after all only a modification of tradition, I thought that the aim which I had in view was to be gained without discussion of this kind.

Setting therefore the spelling aside, the question remained whether the pronunciation in Milton's time differed so from our own as to need attention in an examination of his verse ; and I was decidedly of opinion that it did not : and as I was loth to hamper the metrical facts which I wished to notice with any-

thing so unfamiliar and uncertain as restorations of old pronunciation are apt to be, I chose to disregard the whole subject except parenthetically.

But I was led in my first edition to adopt the suggestion that the monosyllabic prepositions, *to*, *from*, *with*, etc., might have had more stress value in Milton's time than they have now. I do not myself see any sign of this in Milton's verse, and I should not have inserted the opinion if the following disproof of it had occurred to me. Shakespeare, whose early verse may be described as syllabic, gradually came to write a verse dependent on stress, which we may assume was the speech-accent of his time; and from his later work we can tell exactly the relative stress-values of the syllables in the sentences. Now the prepositions in question are among the first words to lose full syllabic value in this competition: see the following passage from *Antony and Cleopatra*,

We must return to the court of guard: the night  
Is shiny; and, they say, we shall embattle  
By the second hour, in the morn.

It is, I think, certain from such verse as this that these prepositions had even less syllabic value in the speech of Shakespeare's time than they have now; and I suppose it follows that they had not more in Milton's time.

In another place I rejected the notion that the shortening of words like *general* in Milton was due to a clumsy trilling of the *r*, and a pronunciation like *generl*. It has seemed to me as if it was the fashion of the present day rather to exaggerate the difference between the older pronunciation and our own. With regard to *r* it is, I believe, universally assumed that it was

without exception trilled throughout England in Chaucer's time\*. But in Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, vol. ii, p. 511 of the third edition, under his account of Westminster Abbey, which was at first called Thorney Abbey, is the following note:—

‘Wace (10653) enlarges on the name, and his phonetic spelling illustrates his natural difficulty in pronouncing the letter þ.

En un islet esteit assise,  
 Zoné out nom, joste Tamise;  
 Zoné por ço l' apelon,  
 Ke d' espine i out foison,  
 E ke l' ewe en alout environ.  
 Ee en engleiz isle apelon,  
 Ee est isle, æn est espine,  
 Seit rainz, seit arbre, seit racine;  
 Zoné, ço est en engleiz  
 Isle d' espine en franceiz.’

from which it seems to me to follow that *thorn* was pronounced in London in the twelfth century as it is now: for if the *r* had been trilled it would surely have appeared in the Norman-French as *zorn*. Can there be possibly any other explanation of this?

It is true that a number of words are to be found in Milton's poems which he stresses differently from us; and these are generally marked with their peculiar accent in the common editions. The following list of them is taken from Nares' *Orshoepe*; I do not know how complete it is, and I have omitted a few words, which I thought doubtful or not requiring notice.

Aspéct. Áttribúted (also attributed). Blasphémous. Brigad.

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\* Thus Prof. Skeat (Chaucer, vol. vi, p. xxix), ‘*r* is always strongly trilled,’ etc.; and A. Ellis and Dr. Sweet say the same. The evidence seems to me insufficient.

Captive (verb). Colleague. Commerce. Comrade. Consult (subst.). Contest (subst.). Contribute. Converse (subst.). Convoy. Crystalline. Egress. Exile. Farewell (subst.). Impulse. Instinct (subst.). Mankind. Midnight. Odorous. Perfume (subst.). Precincts. Prescript. Process. Precinct. Product. Réceptacle. Reflux. Remediless. Sepulchre. Sojourn. Sunbeam. Sunshine. Survey (subst.). Traverse (verb). Triumph (verb, also triumph). Uncouth. Uproar. Volubility.

Of the above words, which it will be seen are mostly Latin, about ten are either with this accentuation peculiar to Milton, or of very rare occurrence in poetry. The remaining thirty are about equally divided between words which were thus accentuated in his time, and words the accent of which had already shifted, or was then shifting, and for which he preferred the older or more correct pronunciation. Some of them he himself accents differently in different places: they seldom give rise to any doubt; and when they do, a knowledge of his rhythms is necessary to solve the difficulty.

For if the old poets are to be our authority for the accent and pronunciation of their time, we must first understand their rhythmical intention, nor can trustworthy conclusions be drawn from their verse until the verse be understood; and Milton wrote much more carefully than he has been criticized. The learned Tyrwhitt, for example—to whom I gladly record a heavy debt of enjoyment for his edition of the *Canterbury Tales*,—when commenting on the structure of the following verse from the *Prologue*,—

Of Engeland to Can|terbú|ry they wénde,  
which he thus divides, and arguing against the supposition that

Chaucer can have written 'without any restraint' of metrical rule with respect to 'superfluous syllables,' justly parallels Chaucer's trisyllabic feet with examples from Milton; and, among some lines from *Paradise Lost*, which he explains more or less correctly, he gives our ex. 44, page 38,

Things not revealed which the invisable King,  
which he thus divides, not only violating both the scansion and rhythm, but neglecting the correct elision as printed by Milton, in order to establish an inferior rhythm, which makes the line like his misinterpretation of the line quoted from Chaucer.

That same line of Chaucer may serve me to justify my complaint of what I called the exaggeration of the differences of the old pronunciation. It is one of three lines in the first thirty of the *Prologue* which contain the word Canterbury, and Canterbury is used to fill either three or four places in the verse: thus—

Of Engeland to Canterbury they wende.  
That toward Canterbury wolden ryde.

from which I should conclude that *Canterbury* was pronounced in Chaucer's time as it is now; for we say either *Canterbury* or *Canterb'ry*. But on p. 264 of vol. I of the Aldine edition, I am instructed to pronounce the lines thus—

Of Engeland to Kan'terber'ee dhaby wendë.  
Dhat tohwerd Kan'terber'ee wolden reedë.

And thus written the first of these verses will not scan. *dhaby* does not look inexpugnable, but confining criticism to *Canterberree* this *ee* seems to be at least an exaggeration. It must be the vowel sound of *feel*, Ellis' *ii* (the longest of all the *i*, *y*, sounds; being twice the *i* in the French *fini*), and it is presum-

ably put here for his *ii* (which is the prolonged or double form of the short *i* in the English *finny*), for the reason that this latter sound is more difficult of pronunciation, and the instructions are intended for ordinary readers. But even this *ii* would be an extreme allowance of length. It happens that *bury* is one of the words in the table which Ellis gives to illustrate the changes of pronunciation since the fourteenth century, and he writes it *ber·i*, unchanged from Chaucer's time to our own. So that it seems that (*ee=ii*) the heaviest of all the four *i*, *y*, sounds, is put instead of (*i*) the lightest, to show us how to pronounce *y*, which we should have pronounced correctly if left to ourselves; whereas the antiquary's explanation destroys the verse.

But my only purpose in writing these notes on Milton was to draw attention to his workmanship, and to combat the common opinion that there is no such thing as English prosody. It is not too much to say that most of our classical scholars have regarded the ten-syllable verses of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton, as so many better or worse attempts to compose regular, alternately stressed, so-called iambic lines; broken here and there by the negligent admission of 'superfluous' syllables. The language of Tyrwhitt in the following note is typical: he is speaking of rhymed verse:—

'It is agreed, I believe, that in our heroick metre those verses (considered singly) are the most harmonious in which the accents fall upon the even syllables; but it has never (that I know) been defined how far a verse may vary from this its most perfect form, and yet remain a verse. On the  *tenth* (or rhyming) syllable a strong accent is in all cases indispensably

required, and in order to make the line tolerably harmonious, it seems necessary that at least *two more* of the *even* syllables should be accented, the *fourth* being (almost always) one of them. Milton, however, has not subjected his verse EVEN TO THESE RULES; particularly (either by NEGLIGENCE or design) he has frequently put an unaccented syllable in the *fourth* place.

## APPENDIX F

## ON METRICAL EQUIVALENCE.

I USED the term 'metrical equivalence' as I found it. It only means that two short syllables are equivalent to one long syllable. In Greek and Latin they are so considered; and as most of our poets have been familiar with the poetry of those languages, it is likely that they may sometimes have imagined that the rule was natural to verse in all languages, and they may have been also unconsciously affected by it for better or worse; and this, although the declared attempts to write English verse on the classical system have failed.

My friend, the late Father Gerard Hopkins, to whom I sent the MS. of my tract for criticism, blamed my omission of any statement of what he considered the truth on this point. He wrote thus to me:—

'I cannot but hope that in your metrical paper you will somewhere distinctly state the principle of equivalence, and that it was quite unrecognized in Milton's, and still more in Shakespeare's time. All, but especially young students, need to be made clearly to understand what metrical equivalence is, that it

is in use in English now, and that it was not then, —and that it was Milton's artifices, as you explain them, that helped to introduce it.'

In quoting this I consider that I have done my duty by the theory. I suppose that the statement represents fairly what some metrists hold, for it is the opinion of one who was learned and acute on all such questions. I go with it so far that I am ready to grant that in English two short syllables may sometimes be equivalent to one long one; but it seems to me wrong to imagine that English rhythms can ever be explained or governed by such a fiction as this is, when it is made a general law: because we recognize different gradations of length both in our long and short syllables; because also all the rhythms which it is called in to explain are governed by stress, and stressing a short syllable can never make it equal in length to two unstressed syllables, which is really what is intended to be said. Or if this meaning be denied, and equivalence defined as between unstressed syllables only, it is enough to remark, that in blank verse the place occupied by two short syllables may, as often as not, be filled as well by one short as by one long syllable; so that a short syllable must be equivalent to a long one. The fact is that our classical verse is a hybrid, and cannot be explained exclusively by English or by classical rule; nor is much light thrown on it by straining the analogy of Greek and Latin quantitative feet. In Milton's verse the chief metrical rule is the number of syllables; and though verse written on his or Shakespeare's early model is the most ready of any to accept the equivalence theory, yet it is, plain that even here the stress is of at least equal importance,

and asserts itself to decide every question, as soon as the syllabic limit is trifled with. In this respect the practice of Shakespeare is full of teaching; for as he threw off the syllabic trammels of his early style, he came to determine his rhythm by stress: and Milton did just the same in *Samson Agonistes*, though he learnedly disguised his liberty by various artifices. Immediately English verse is written free from a numeration of syllables, it falls back on the number of stresses as its determining law: that is its governing power, and constitutes its form; and this is a perfectly different system from that which counts the syllables. It seems also the most natural to our language; and I think that the cause of this distinction not being recognized is the fact that stress cannot be excluded from consideration even in verse that depends primarily on the number of syllables. The two systems are mixed in our tradition, and they must be separated before a prosody of stress can arise. But if once the notion be got rid of that you must have so many syllables in a line to make a verse, or must account for the supernumerary ones in some such manner as the Greeks or Latins would have done, then the stress will declare its supremacy; which, as may be seen in Shakespeare and Milton, it is burning to do.

Now the primary law of pure stressed verse is, that there shall never be a conventional or imaginary stress: that is, *the verse cannot make the stress, because it is the stress that makes the verse*. It is the neglect of this which is the fault of Coleridge's *Christabel*, considered as stressed verse. The reader will not think that I am finding fault with that poem, when I am only quarrelling with its preface, in which Coleridge implied that

it was written in purely stressed verse, whereas it is not. He says that the metre of it is 'founded on a *new principle*, namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion.' Now here was, as far as it went, a definite statement of the laws of a stress prosody; but if we examine the verse we find that we cannot count by stresses any more than we can in Milton's blank verse, for *Christabel* admits conventional stresses, just as any English verse had done before Coleridge's time, and does to this day.

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock  
And the owls have awaken'd the crowing cock,  
Tu—whit!—Tu—whoo!  
And hark again! the crowing cock  
How drowsily it crew.

It was a slip in the wording of Coleridge's definition when he said that the third and fifth lines had four accents\*, but he did mean the fifth to have three, and the second accent or stress of the three is a conventional stress: it does not exist in the language, but in the metre, and has to be imagined because the metre requires it: and it is plain that if the stress is to be the rule of the verse, the verse must not thus be relied on to create the stress.

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\* 'Only four accents' must therefore be interpreted 'not more than four', but the manner of printing line 3 suggests that it may have been meant to have four stresses.

To save the reader the trouble of turning to the poem to satisfy himself on this point, I will quote some more lines which offend against this law of stressed verse.

From her kennel beneath the rock,  
She maketh answer to the clock.  
A furlong from the castle gate.  
Of her own betrothed knight.

This poem with its preface has no doubt done much to hinder the right understanding of stressed verse: for Coleridge would not be lightly suspected of thus mistaking his own method:—but it is plain that he did not ever shake off the tradition of these conventional, metric stresses, nor really imagine a stressed verse which should be entirely free from them. The reader will understand that I am not saying that the lines in question are bad or good: they may be necessary in the poem for this reason, that the stress not being really creative of the rhythm, but only accenting the regular beats of a loose metre,—an unbroken succession of strong stresses would make monotony or singsong; which is generally avoided throughout *Christabel* by the common methods, the stresses being frequently disregarded, and sometimes overloaded: Whereas in pure stressed verse the monotony would be avoided by inverting some of the stresses or leaving them bare, in such a manner as we are led to expect early in the poem by the lines—

Is the night chillsy and dark?  
The night is chillsy, but not dark.

With regard to stress *Christabel* is, with such rare exceptions, in the same condition as *L' Allegro*; while the syllabic liberty, so far from being new, is found in English verse from the earliest times.

Next to this mistake of admitting conventional stresses, I would mention another practice of writers who have attempted the freer verse based on stress, which is this; they set up a rhythm in the first lines, and expect that this will assert itself throughout the poem, in spite of false quantities and conventional stresses. This, though it has not hindered the poems so written from being much praised for their rhythmical flow, implies the same fault as Coleridge's, but it shows also a greater misapprehension of the qualities of stressed verse; one chief advantage of which is that no rhythm need be exactly repeated. The constant repetition of the same stressed rhythm in every line must produce a 'sing-song,' and it is a clumsy remedy to break the singsong at the cost of the prosody: whereas stressed verse, if freely written, would be as far removed from singsong as is *Paradise Lost*. If the number of stresses in each line be fixed, [and such a fixation would be the metre,] and if the stresses be determined only by the language and its sense, and if the syllables which they have to carry do not overburden them, then every line may have a different rhythm; though so much variety is not of necessity.

Now this is very much what Milton was aiming at in the lyrical parts of *Samson*, but he still sought to accomplish it by fictitious units and feet after the classical models, as I have attempted to show. There is really no reason at all for the existence of these: only one step was needed, which was to cast them away. He wrote in the choruses of *Samson* a rhythmical stressed verse, and scanned it by means of fictions. *He need not have troubled himself about the scansion at all. If the*

*stressed rhythm is the beauty of the verse, it is a sufficient account of it.* But this seems too simple to be understood.

The metrical questions which arise are, What will a stress carry? and what are the usual units of the verse? This is beyond my subject: but when the laws of English stressed verse are recognized, it will, I think, be found that they explain all those irregularities of well-written free verse, to which metrists are now at pains to match the names of Greek quantitative feet, though these have no natural relation to them. They adopted them, I presume, as a makeshift for a true terminology. Supposing  $\Lambda$  to represent a stressed syllable, we want names for the following units,  $-\Lambda\cup$ ,  $\cup\Lambda-$ ,  $\cup\Lambda\cup$ ,  $\Lambda\cup\cup$ ,  $\cup\cup\Lambda$ ,  $\Lambda-$ ,  $-\Lambda$ ,  $\Lambda\cup$ ,  $\cup\Lambda$ ,  $\Lambda$ . (In the present edition of this book the reader will find a further account of this subject in Appendix J, p. 88, to which I refer him.) I will only add that when English poets will write verse governed honestly by natural speech-stress, they will discover the laws for themselves, and will find open to them an infinite field of rhythm as yet untouched. There is nothing which may not be done in it, and it is perhaps not the least of its advantages that it makes excellence difficult.

## APPENDIX G

### ON THE USE OF GREEK TERMINOLOGY IN ENGLISH PROSODY.

MOST readers will observe that I have avoided using the term Iambic of blank verse. *Rising* and *falling* are proper and convenient terms to distinguish the two main kinds of unit in accentual verse, and they may, I think, be used in

the analysis of most English verse without any danger of misunderstanding. These terms depend on the tendency of an accented syllable to be spoken at a higher pitch than an unaccented syllable: (this is the original meaning of *oxyton* and *acute accent*). Hence a foot or metrical unit accented on its first syllable tends to fall in pitch towards the end, and is thus called a *falling* foot; while a foot in which the unaccented part precedes the accented will rise in pitch towards the end, and is therefore called a *rising* foot: and any metre or rhythm may of course be styled by the name of its prevalent unit.

The word *stress* was, in my opinion, preferable to *accent* for my purpose, because, though it includes acute and other accent it does not necessarily imply them. It is a wider term and may include all forms of accent that distinguish the stronger syllables. Stress without the true acute accent may be heard in the monotone recitation of the prayers in cathedrals, the ordinary 'accent' being preserved without any raising of the voice pitch. In music the accent is often coincident with a lowering of the pitch; and this can of course be reproduced in speech: but the tendency of a stressed syllable to carry a true acute accent is sufficient to justify the use of these terms *rising* and *falling*.

Whatever terms be used, the important matter is to have their definition fixed and clear; and for that reason anything must be better than the application of the names of quantitative Greek feet to our English verse. I believe they were first used thus through a misconception, and I am sure that they lead to nothing but confusion. Before any one calls the feet

in English blank verse iambs let him consider in what respect they are entitled to the name. A Greek or Latin iambus is a foot of two syllables, the first of which is always short, and the second always, at least by position, long, while the accent is as often on the first as on the second. The so-called English iambus, whatever its commonest condition may be, may have either of its syllables short, or long, or both may be short, or both long, while the stress is always on the last. There is nothing in common between the classical and the English feet except what is common to all disyllabic feet: the English iambs might for this be as well called trochees or spondees; and if the consideration be added that in the Greek and Latin iambus the first syllable is reckoned to be exactly half the value of the second—just as a crotchet is half a minim—it is plain that it must be better to renounce altogether the attempt to readjust a term, which means something so remotely and definitely different from that to which we would apply it.

I am convinced also that it is the misuse of this and like terms which leads many to think that stress in English corresponds with quantity in Greek and Latin. But syllables are in English as much distinguished by length and brevity as they can have been in Greek or Latin; while, on the other hand, Latin verse (if not Greek) was as much distinguished by its stress as English verse is, although that stress may have been less marked, and not of such an overruling character. If this assertion is new or strange to the reader, let him question his ear as to what the chief differentiation of the lines of the *Æneid* is. Take for example the first two lines: they both commence with a dactyl; how do these dactyls differ?

Arma vi|rúmque cá|no  
Itá|li|am fá|co prófulgus.

Or let him think what it was that Ovid sought after when he ruled that his pentameters should close with a disyllable; or what Horace gained for his Sapphic line by varying the caesura.

Stress is easily perceived in Latin poetry; indeed the distinction between different Latin poets' treatment of the same metres and our appreciation of their versification depend on it. But the verse is not usually approached from this side. A boy is taught at school the sequence of long and short syllables, and an attention to the position of caesuras and other breaks which scholars have discovered, and by observing these he counterfeits the rhythms. *But it was the rhythms that caused the caesuras.* If a boy were told, for example, that it saved the monotony of a pentameter to stress the penultimate, he would understand what he was doing, and would use a disyllable in the last place with right intention; not as he does now, because he knows that any other word will be scratched out by his tutor. It is possible that the darkness in which scholars find themselves with respect to Greek rhythms has affected their manner of regarding the Latin: for when they come to teach a boy to write Greek iambics they could hardly act otherwise than they do, since there is no one who could point out with confidence the Greek rhythms for imitation. No doubt those scholars who write careful Greek verse do please their ear, as it has been trained by long study of the models; but it is an English ear that they please, trained by reading the models in the same wrong way as that in which they read their own imitations. No one could tell, *a priori*,

how the result would be likely to sound in a Greek ear. The excellence of such performances seems one of the most artificial things in the world, though it may be none the worse for that.

As for quantity in English verse, whoever confounds it with stress will be sure to violate it\*. Some critics even assert that it does not exist. I suppose that they are led to think so by the numerous false quantities which disfigure English so-called anapaestic and hexameter verse, or because our language does not countenance the fiction concerning quantity, which is drummed into all of us in our tender years; that is, that two short syllables are always exactly equal to one long—which, however, no doubt they sometimes are, even in English, if we could only tell how to measure them. We are accustomed to allow ourselves to consider every syllable on its own merits, in its special place, and thus we can admit all degrees of length and brevity as they really exist; distinctions which must have equally existed in Greek and Latin speech, but which their system of prosody overrode, for its theory admitted only units and half units, and nothing between; and we should have to adopt the same rules of quantity for our words as they did for theirs to obtain the same results. But, whatever our practice may be, there can be no doubt that our language contains syllables as short as it is possible for the tongue to frame, and others as long, I suppose, as spoken syllables ever were; and it is strange that the recognition of these should be hindered by the existence and recognition of syllables of intermediate lengths.

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\* The reader will find this question, the application of the classical rules of quantity applied to English, fully treated in Mr. Stone's essay printed with this edition of this book.

## APPENDIX H

## SPECIMENS OF TEN-SYLLABLE VERSE, ETC.

## I.

To fill up the spare pages of this sheet, I will give some specimens of early ten-syllable verse: and first, in illustration of Miltonic elision, that the reader may for himself compare Chaucer's use with Milton's, I give, from the beginning of the *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, the lines in which super-numerary syllables occur within the verse. Neglecting many elisions of the weak terminal vowels now lost to the language, which do not here concern us, I have marked the super-numerary syllables, as in the examples from Milton, by italic type or apostrophes. I take the text from the Rev. Dr. Morris' edition in the Clarendon Press series, except that I have written *ever* for *euere*, and *deliuer* for *deliueere*.

- Of which verru engend'red is the flour. 4.  
 Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende. 16 and 22.  
 So hadde I spoken with hem everichon. 31.  
 And *ever* honoured for his worthinesse. 50.  
 At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne. 51.  
 Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye. 57.  
 And evertmore he hadde a *sovereyn* prys. 67.  
 A *lover* and a lusty bacheler. 80.  
 And wonderly *deliuer* and greet of strengthe. 84.  
 He was as fresh as *is* the moneth of May. 92 (month).  
 A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene. 115.  
 That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy. 119.  
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel keepe. 130 (coude).  
 And ful plesant, and amiable of port. 138.  
 She was so charitable, and so piteous. 143.

Pītoūs was accentuated pītous; but Chaucer's prosody, like the French, allows such words at the end of the line: where their accent being shifted *metri gratiā*, they cannot have had the full stress of monosyllabic endings like the preceding examples quoted; and thus we see another way in which inversions of the fifth foot come naturally to those familiar with our national poetry: see p. 16.

Is lik'nēd til a fish *that is* waterlees. 180.=that's.

What sholde he studie, and make himselfen wood. 184.

Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure. 185.

Grehoundēs he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight. 190.

And, for to festne his hood under his chin. 195.

He hadde of gold y-wrought a curious pin. 196.

His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas. 198.=ball'd.

His botēs souple, his hors in grete estat. 203.

A fat swan loved he best of any roost. 206.

Unto his ordre he was a noble post. 214 and 220.

Ful wel biloved, and famulier was he. 215.

With frankleyns overal in his contree. 216 and 249.

So estatly was he of his governance. 281.

I give these lines without any opinion on the authority of this text, which gets rid of several other examples.

## II.

On page 53 it is said that Ellis represents Chaucer's *able* sometimes as *aab'l*, and sometimes as *aabl'*. *aa* means merely the long *ah* sound, and this syllable was without doubt commonly stressed; but about the *b'l* did Chaucer say *miseráb'l* or *miserábl'*, *possib'l* or *possíbl'*? It seems most probable, as Ellis' alternative spelling would imply, that Chaucer said either, and in the same words, as we may hear now in modern French; but I think myself that even the spelling *b'l* shortens the longer

pronunciation more than is always quite justifiable. I will give some lines from Chaucer which will show that although the syllable was 'elided' before a vowel,—as in lines 138, 143, above from the prologue,—it was yet strong enough to fill a place in the line, even before an open vowel; and in the vagarious spelling of the MSS., which are contemporary enough to be in evidence, it appears as *bel* and *bi*, just as is required by its rhymes in modern verse. I reproduce Dr. Morris' text from the 'Aldine' edition.

Abhominable to the God of hevene. Somp. 300.

Ne see ye not this honorable knyght. March. 1010.

With invisible wounde ay incurable. Monk. 610.

Lord Phebus, cast thin merciable eyghe. Frank. 308.

As it possibil is a frend to be. Shipman. 32.

Whether there is at this early date any sign of the weight of this Latin termination giving way to the more natural speech-stress of the word with which it is compounded I have not knowledge to say: such evidence would, I suppose, first appear in words where the two accents collided, as in *dampnable*, and in the verse of more purely English writers, who probably use such words more sparingly; but in the Pearl there is the following line:—

What resonabele hyre be naught be runne,

which, if the text be right, shows a shortening of the *a*, for the line has only four stresses; the spelling *bele* is nothing. See also órribly, *Monk's Tale*, 627.

The following lines may interest the reader for different reasons:—

The aungel of God, and every maner boone. 2<sup>nd</sup> Nun. 356.

The slaughtre of cristen folk, and deshonoúr. M. of Law. 858.

And *bénigne harte*, shall serve hym till I dye. C<sup>t</sup> of Love. 214.  
 To *rémeue* all the rokkes of Brytaigne. Frank. 485.  
 And many a labour, and many a grete emprise. Frank. 4.  
 O noble almighty Sampson, leef and deere. Monk. 62.  
 O noble Sampson, strengest of al mankynde. Monk. 85.  
 And doun fel temple and al, and ther it lay. 95.  
 Well oughte men thy pitous deth complayne. Monk. 387.  
 With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe. N. Priest's. 203.  
 That thilke day was perilous to the. 413.

## III.

The following is a specimen of Marlowe's blank verse, from the last act of the first part of *Tamburlaine*. The text is from Mr. Bullen's edition, but as I am not concerned with the sense, I have not adopted emendations :—

Ah, fair Zenocrate!—divine Zenocrate!—  
 Fair is too foul an epithet for thee,  
 That in thy passion for thy country's love,  
 And fear to see thy kingly father's harm,  
 With hair dishevelled wip'st thy watery cheeks;  
 And, like to Flora in her morning pride,  
 Shaking her silver tresses in the air,  
 Rain'st on the earth resolvèd pearl in showers,  
 And sprinklest sapphires on thy shining face,  
 Where Beauty, Mother to the Muses, sits  
 Taking instructions from thy flowing eyes,  
 Eyes, when that Ebena steps to heaven,  
 In silence of thy solemn evening's walk,  
 Make, in the mantle of the richest night,  
 The moon, the planets, and the meteors, light;  
 There angels, in their crystal armours fight  
 A doubtful battle with my tempted thoughts  
 For Egypt's freedom, and the Soldan's life;  
 His life that so consumes Zenocrate,  
 Whose sorrows lay more siege unto my soul,  
 Than all my army to Damascus' walls:  
 And neither Persia's sovereign, nor the Turk

Troubled my senses with conceit of foil  
 So much by much as doth Zenocrate.  
 | What is beauty, saith my sufferings, then?  
 If all the pens that ever poets held  
 Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,  
 And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,  
 Their minds, and muses on admired themes;  
 If all the heavenly quintessence they still  
 From their immortal flowers of poesy,  
 Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive  
 The highest reaches of a human wit;  
 If these had made one poem's period,  
 And all combined in beauty's worthiness,  
 Yet should there hover in their restless heads  
 One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,  
 Which into words no virtue can digest.

25

But how unseemly is it for my sex,  
 My discipline of arms and chivalry,  
 My nature and the terror of my name,  
 To harbour thoughts effeminate and faint!  
 Save only that in beauty's just applause,  
 With whose instinct the soul of man is touched:  
 And every warrior that is rapt with love  
 Of fame of valour, and of victory,  
 Must needs have beauty bear on his conceits:  
 I thus conceiving and subduing both  
 That which hath stopt the tempest of the gods,  
 Even from the fiery-spangled veil of Heaven,  
 To feel the lowly warmth of shepherds' flames,  
 And march in cottages of strowed weeds,  
 Shall give the world to note for all my birth  
 That virtue solely is the sum of glory,  
 And fashions men with true nobility.

This passage, which well exhibits the famed magnificence of Marlowe's verse, has, compared with Milton, the following characteristics: Rarity of elisions. Rarity of inversions: thus the nine-syllable verse (line 25) has great force. Absence of

breaks: the unity of the line being often further strengthened by alliteration. Frequency of weak third foot: this being actually the commonest type of line. Also the use of rhyme as an ornament. Rhyme occurs in *Paradise Lost* (see I. 146. 8. 51; II. 220. 1; IV. 24-7), but only as a natural richness among the varieties of speech; and it would seem that it cannot be forbidden in a long poem but by the scrupulosity which betrays art.

This verse is soon monotonous, and, as Mr. Bullen has lately pointed out, Peele wrote it before Marlowe. From his *Arraignment of Paris*, 1584, I quote this example (Act iv).

Sacred and just, thou great and dreadful Jove,  
And you thrice-reverend powers, whom love nor hate  
May wrest awry; if this, to me a man,  
This fortune fatal be, that I must plead  
For safe excusal of my guiltless thought,  
The honour more makes my mishap the less,  
That I a man must plead before the gods,  
Gracious forbearers of the world's amiss,  
For her, whose beauty how it hath enticed,  
This heavenly senate may with me aver. . . .  
I might offend, sith I was guerdonèd,  
And tempted more than ever creature was  
With wealth, with beauty, and with chivalry,  
And so preferd beauty before them all,  
The thing that hath enchanted heaven itself.  
And for the one, contentment is my wealth,  
A shell of salt will serve a shepherd swain,  
A slender banquet in a homely scrip,  
And water running from the silver spring.  
For arms, they dread no foes that sit so low;  
A thorn can keep the wind from off my back,  
A sheepcote thatch'd a shepherd's palace hight.  
Of tragic Muses shepherds con no skill;  
Enough is them, if Cupid ben displeased,

To sing his praise on slender oaten pipe.  
 And thus, thrice-reverend, have I told my tale,  
 And crave the torment of my guiltless soul  
 To be measured by my faultless thought.  
 If warlike Pallas, or the Queen of Heaven  
 Sue to reverse my sentence by appeal,  
 Be it as please your majesties divine;  
 The wrong, the hurt, not mine, if any be,  
 But hers whose beauty claimed the prize of me.

These passages of blank verse before Shakespeare show it in transition from the rhymed couplet.

## APPENDIX J

ON THE RULES OF THE COMMON LIGHTER STRESS-  
 RHYTHMS, AND THE ENGLISH ACCENTUAL HEXAMETER.

### I.

§ 1. HAVING frequently been asked to add some definite elucidation of stress-prosody to the remarks on it in the preceding Appendix F (where I said about it all that, it seemed to me, could fittingly come into a textbook on Milton's verse); I will here give a few of the common laws of stressed verse and examine some examples.

§ 2. These 'laws' are merely the tabulation of what my ear finds in English stressed verse: but they appeal confidently to the reader's ear for confirmation. He will please to note that I am dealing only with the lighter forms of these stressed rhythms, that is with such as are called dactylic, anapaestic, comic iambic, and hexameter (as far as stress governs disyllabic metres, it is I think sufficiently covered by our examination of Milton); and when I say that anything is not

allowable I mean only that it seems to my ear unsatisfactory in these lighter rhythms. *There is no limit to rhythm*, nor can I imagine any kind of effect, or any possible collocation of syllables in a 'foot,' which might not be well employed in some poetic metre or other.

§ 3. I use the symbol  $\wedge$  to denote a stressed syllable. This does not imply that it is a long syllable. The properer symbol is an acute accent, single or double ; but I do not use that for three reasons. First, because it is convenient for primary analysis to have a symbol which does not raise the distinction between single and double stress\*. Secondly, because the acute accent does not range well with the quantitative symbols — and  $\cup$ . It has the appearance of being less instead of more important, and thus misrepresents the real units to the eye. Thirdly, the laws to which attention is called are *nova praecepta*, and it is well to have a new symbol to indicate them.

§ 4. Also I shall use the terms *heavy*, *light* and *short* to denote the quantitative value of syllables, instead of the usual terms *long* and *short*†, for the following reasons :—

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\* Double stress and the rhythms which it introduces are alluded to below, see § 16. [Some exx. have occurred p. 44.]

† Though this distinction between light and short is not made in the earlier part of this book, I do not find anything there which need cause confusion. On pages 17-19 the sign  $\cup\cup$  is used merely to distinguish the *weak feet*: and on pages 43, 44 to show the light (not always short) places in the dactylic passages of *Samson*. In Milton's blank verse the distinction between light and short (indeed even between light and heavy) implies greater refinement of analysis than is possible in an account of the structure of the verse; and it is open to much uncertainty; at least I have never myself discovered which syllables Milton considered short and which long, so as to be able to draw any line between them.

The term *long*, as employed in Greek and Latin prosody, includes not only those syllables which have a long vowel, but also those syllables which have a short vowel long 'by position,' that is, having two or more consonants following it; while the term *short* includes only those syllables which have their short (or shortened) vowel pure, or followed by only one consonant. But the rules of stress make a very wide distinction between the heavy long syllables on the one hand, which practically retard speech (whether by virtue of the length of the vowel, as in *hâte*, *bright*, *dōwn*; or by an overcrowding of consonants as in *incēnsēbreashing*); and those lighter long syllables on the other hand, in which a short vowel, though classically long by position, is not much retarded by consonants (as in *and*, or the second syllable of *brightest*). Stressed verse does not, for instance, make much distinction between the second syllables of *brighter* and *brightest*, though the one would in classical prosody be short, and the other long. Keeping therefore the term *short*, as it is used in the prosody of the Greeks, for the very shortest syllables, it is necessary to make two classes of their *long* syllables; and these I shall distinguish into *heavy* and *light*, as just explained. And as there will be, in what I shall have to say, seldom any cause to distinguish between the *light* and the *short*, the class *light* will include the short, unless the latter are specially distinguished, and thus it comes about that in stressed verse syllables are primarily classed as *heavy* and *light* instead of *long* and *short*.

§ 5. The symbols will therefore be as follows :—

Λ denotes a stressed syllable whether light or heavy.

— denotes a heavy syllable as defined.

∪ a light syllable as defined, and will include the short syllables, which may however be sometimes denoted by the lesser short sign ∪.

† It is perhaps well to repeat the warning, that as syllables vary in all degrees of quantity from longest to shortest, there cannot be an accurate line drawn between *heavy* and *light*; and a syllable of intermediate quantity may in some collocations appear heavy, in others *light*\*. The typical heavy syllables however are always heavy and long, and the typical light syllables are plainly distinguishable from them; while the true short syllables proper remain always, as in Greek or Latin, an accurately separate class.

§ 6. The first two rules of stress-prosody are given in Appendix F.

I. THE STRESS GOVERNS THE RHYTHM. *Ex hypothesi.*

II. The second rule is a logical corollary from the first, namely, that THE STRESSES MUST ALL BE TRUE SPEECH-STRESSES: i. e. the rhythm must never rely upon the metrical form to supply a stress which is not in the natural speech-intonation, but is introduced only by the necessities of the metre. (This is explained on p. 69; examples will be found below exx. 12, 13, 20, 21, 22.) The reader to whom this offers any difficulty

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\* If the reader asks for an example, I suggest the word *young* in ex. 5. *Young* is classically short before a vowel, for this *ng* is only a modified *n*, and the *ov* is of course only a short *v*; but here, being both before a consonant and in a specially weak place of the line, the syllable seems more heavy than light.

should master it at once. The reason for the rule is that since it is the stress that determines the rhythm, the rhythm cannot create the stress. The result of not observing this rule is confusion and uncertainty in the verse: for the ear being called on in any one place to impose a stress which does not exist in the natural reading of the sense, will feel at liberty in other places to refuse the rhythm offered to it; and will often replace it by some commoner form, obtained by substituting a metrical false stress of its own, as it has been before compelled to do.

§ 7. If we now examine any simple verses written on the accentual system, further laws should appear. And since the verse is framed on the stresses, the first question will be concerning the complements of these stresses: what do these stresses carry with them? Any example will show; the more familiar the better. Bp. Heber's hymn will be well known to most readers.

(1) Brightest and best of the sons of the morning.

This line was no doubt intended by its author for an accentual dactylic line, and would have been scanned by him thus:

Brightest and | best of the | sons of the | morning.

But that is not its right division into stress-units or feet.

III. It is a general law of stress, as I think any one who consults his ear must perceive, that A STRESS HAS MORE CARRYING POWER OVER THE SYLLABLE NEXT TO IT, THAN IT HAS OVER A SYLLABLE REMOVED FROM IT BY AN INTERVENING SYLLABLE.

And this rule, supposing it to be the only rule, would give us the following units :

Brightest | and best of | the sons of | the morning,

which is a better explanation of the verse upon the theory of stress. But this clearly is not right, and a little consideration will convince us of another rule, namely :

IV. That a STRESS HAS A PECULIARLY STRONG ATTRACTION FOR ITS OWN PROCLITICS AND ENCLITICS and that it will attach them by preference, and override rule III, unless forbidden by some other law, as it sometimes is by rule V.

This law will give the following division :

Brightest | and best | of the sons | of the morning,

and this is the right explanation of this verse.

§ 8. I do not see that there is any cause for surprise at finding the metrical units sometimes determined by grammar. The conditions are these : the main element and determinant of the metre is the stress—this is conceded—and this stress is often determined by the grammar. Now the syllables which fall between the stresses must be related to them, and their natural relation is that they depend on them, some on one stress and some on another; and if we question which depend on which, there is no escape from the grammatical speechbond: even the expression of the grammatical stress by musical pitch, is pitch in relation to the parts of the grammatical unit within itself. The only objection which I can imagine is this : an objector may say—‘It is true that the stresses do carry the syllables as you explain, but in doing this they make a dactylic or anapaestic

system; and it is that which satisfies the ear, for the ear is attending to these regular metrical units and not to the irregular speech-units of the stress.' Now I do not at all quarrel with this view. I agree with it so far as to say that, *in proportion as the diction is poetic and the versification good, regular metrical units will assert themselves independently of the grammar*, so as to override the irregular units of the speech-stress, and may even come to be the simplest description of some regular accentual English verse. But this is not its true analysis; and I am convinced that if any one who hankers after classical analogies will provisionally cast his fancy aside, and examine the real English construction of the verse, he will never, after understanding it, wish to superimpose upon it a foreign and needless explanation. For the stressed rhythm is a sufficient account of itself: its analysis is complete, and it is more beautiful than any other. I would even say that the analogy with Greek or Latin verse (and it is only analogy) is confusing and worse than useless. Analysis of the English accentual hexameter, for instance, reveals that a trochee (so-called) will serve for a spondee, and it is really provoking that any one should persist in pretending to understand an explanation which, basing itself on the distinction between long and short syllables\*, is reduced to admit that a short syllable will serve for a long one. Besides this absurdity, the analysis of classical verse into classical units is sometimes an arbitrary or doubtful matter when it is at home. Is, for example, the following scheme dactylic or anapaestic?

— u u — u u — u u —

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\* The long and short syllables of the classical metre being represented by accented and unaccented syllables respectively.

and if it may be either, why may it not equally well be this?—

—U|U—U|U—U|U—

Certainly classical prosody does not make the slightest *a priori* probability in favour of an anapaestic or dactylic system in English rather than the one last shown. So again if—U—U—U— may be either trochaic or iambic, why must it be one of these rather than something else? But if the stress-laws be allowed and observed, it matters not what explanation of this sort be indulged in; and if it can add to the pleasure which any one takes in reading the verse, it is so far good, even though its expositors may not always be able to agree about it among themselves.

§ 9. The next line will give us more laws. To write it first as the Bishop would have divided it,

(2) Dawn on our | darkness and | lend us thine | aid.

Here are plainly two bad false quantities. *Dawn on our*, and *lend us thine* are very bad even for accentual dactyls. One has only to speak them detached to perceive this. But as they lie in the verse their faultiness does not appear. The line is quite smooth and satisfactory; it does not halt. How is this? The reason is that, though a bad accentual dactylic verse, it is a very good line on the principles of stress, dividing thus:

Dawn on | our darkness | and lend us | thine aid.

V. The law which this verse may illustrate is this, that (at least in these light rhythms) A STRESS WILL NOT CARRY A HEAVY SYLLABLE WHICH IS REMOVED FROM IT BY ANOTHER SYLLABLE; or thus, A HEAVY SYLLABLE MUST BE CONTIGUOUS

WITH THE STRESSED SYLLABLE THAT CARRIES IT; and it will follow from this, that when the first of two proclitics is heavy, the stress will refuse it unless the two can be contracted by speech into one heavy syllable.

§ 10. There are numberless instances of infraction of this rule in almost all stressed verse hitherto written. Here are some examples from Shelley's *Sensitive Plant*:

- (3) *Each and all* like ministering angels were.
- (4) *Whilst the lagging* hours of the day went by.
- (5) *Like young* lovers whom youth and love make dear.
- (6) *Wrapped and filled* by their mutual atmosphere.

The reader should consider whether he likes the italicized initial feet of these lines or not; they have, of course, a definite character of their own, which is not bad or intolerable in itself. The question is whether such feet are admissible as units of this light verse. If they are not, then their admission puts the verse into another category, and we must describe it differently: only, since by far the greater part of the poem is in a lighter rhythm, we are in a dilemma; nor can one be expected to defend a confusion of two kinds of verse. I should certainly rule them out. There is some explanation of Shelley's practice given below, p. 98, § 13, with further examples and strictures.

§ 11. From rule III above, it would appear that so-called *dactyls* and *anapaests* must be comparatively rare units in stressed verse, and that the typical trisyllabic foot will be one in which the stress is in the middle, with an unstressed syllable on

either side of it, like the word *britannic*, which may provisionally be used as a name for these feet\*.

§ 12. We may now give a list of the common stress-units or feet, which are found in the kind of verse which we are describing.

1st. The bare stress  $\wedge$  without any complement. This is frequently found. (An ex. occurs on p. 75.)

2nd. The two falling disyllabic foot :

$\wedge \cup$   
 $\wedge -$

3rd. The two rising disyllabic foot :

$\cup \wedge$   
 $- \wedge$

4th. The britannics, or mid-stress trisyllabics :

$\cup \wedge \cup$   
 $- \wedge \cup$   
 $\cup \wedge -$   
 $- \wedge -$

5th. The so-called dactyl and anapaest, i.e. the falling and rising trisyllabics :

$\wedge \cup \cup$   
 $\cup \cup \wedge$

6th. The quadrisyllabics :

$\cup \wedge \cup \cup$   
 $- \wedge \cup \cup$   
 $\cup \cup \wedge \cup$   
 $\cup \cup \wedge -$

7th. The five-syllable foot :

$\cup \cup \wedge \cup \cup$

which will rarely occur in the rhythms which we are discussing.

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\* On p. 77, where I gave commonest stress-units (as found in such verse as was there analysed), I intended to call attention to the prevalence of these hitherto unrecognized 'feet' by putting them first in the list.

§ 13. It will be seen that in the above list there is no example of a heavy and light syllable occurring both on the same side of a stress. The forms  $\cup\wedge$  and  $\wedge\cup$  have been excluded by rule V. The other possible forms are  $\cup-\wedge$  and  $\wedge-\cup$ : of these the second is I think rare, and we must be contented here to rule it out by default; of the first, I will give examples from *The Sensitive Plant*, beginning with a full stanza to show the metre.

- And the spring arose on the garden fair,  
 And the spirit of love fell everywhere;  
 (7) And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast  
 Rose from the dream of its wintry rest.  
 (8) And their breath was mixed with faint odour sent.  
 (9) And narcissi the fairest among them all.  
 (10) Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast.  
 (11) Can first lull but at last must awaken it.

Now if we do not approve of the heaviness of the initial feet italicized in these lines, which plainly I do not, we have to ask why Shelley wrote them. Why did he like them? I think the answer is this. Having chosen this particular metre to write in, that is a stressed rhythm, with liberty to use trisyllabic or disyllabic units at will (a metre sometimes called comic-iambic stanza), he knew that it would play havoc with the gentle mood of his poem if it were not freely broken or delayed; and having no system to govern his liberties in breaking the rhythm, he did just what came most naturally to the language, and overloaded the stresses. And he not only

overloaded the stresses, but he did not even keep the stresses intact. The poem is in the same condition as *Christabel* (examined on pp. 73-75). Here are some of Shelley's false stresses :

(12) And the Naiad-like lily of the vale.

(13) Till the fiery sun which is its eye.

Weak places, like these third feet, cannot be admitted in stress-prosody (see rule II, and for the possible omission of stress in stressed verse § 17); so that from these and many other lines in the poem it is clear that *The Sensitive Plant* is not written in pure stressed verse, and that Shelley had not, any more than Coleridge, a consistent practice in that system of versification. This is the account of these verses. A consistent prosody is, however, so insignificant a part in what makes good English poetry, that I find that I do not myself care very much whether some good poetry be consistent in its versification or not: indeed I think I have liked some verses better because they do not scan, and thus displease pedants. I should have put Blake into the 'Golden Treasury' in 1861. However, when one is considering prosody and principles of rhythm, it is necessary to attend to that only; and I cannot admit that these verses are good as mere versification. Shelley's practice has naturally done much to accustom our ear to allow these heavy initial feet in light measures; and it has encouraged others to be careless about such syllables, especially as it requires some pains to avoid them. But it is worth while to add that, in this so-called comic-iambic stanza, the first place is the one to which even the light rising trisyllable is most sparingly admitted by those who have done best in

this metre, and *a fortiori*, the heavy rising trisyllables would be excluded entirely.

† It will be seen that in this metre (in which the lines are very strong, distinct units), this peculiar behaviour of the initial stress of the line in disliking to carry more than one unstressed syllable before it, follows logically from law III above, and confirms the statement that a 'britannic' is the commonest trisyllabic unit of stressed verse. Adopting the classical terminology, the rule would be that in these comic-iambics an anapaest is allowed in any place, but is best excluded from the first. The laws of stress give a perfect account of this, for the first foot is in an exceptional condition, the unstressed syllables that precede its stress having a stress *on one side of them only*; whereas the two unstressed syllables of all the other anapaests have a stress on both sides of them, so that they can divide and go one to one stress and one to another, as they will do if either of them is heavy: and as this is not possible in the first foot, it is for this reason exceptional.

†† Heine's strictness in this respect is one great cause of the crispness and force of this measure in his hands. I cannot do better than give an example of a few stanzas by that master, as they will not only illustrate this point, but will exhibit, better than any words of mine can, the great variety of rhythm possible in the simplest form of strict writing in stress-prosody.

Es tréibt | mich hín, | es tréibt | mich hér!

Noch wénige | Stúnden, | dann sóll ich | sie scháuen,

Sie selber, | die schönste | der schönen | Jungfrauen;—  
Du treues | Hérz, | was póchst du | so schwér!

Die Stúnden | sind áber | ein faúles | Vólk!  
Schléppen | sích | beháglich | tráge,  
Schléichen | gáhnend | íhre | Wége;  
Túmmele | dích, | du faúles | Vólk!

Tóbende | Éile | mich tréibend | erfásst!  
Áber | wohl níemals | líebten | die Hóren;—  
Héimlich | im gráusamen | Búnde | verschwóren,  
Spóttten sie | túckisch | der Líebenden | Hást.

§ 14. If all these feet, in which more than one heavy syllable is carried by a stress on the same side of it, be ruled out, then the simple general rule would seem to be that—

VI. A STRESS WILL NOT CARRY MORE THAN ONE HEAVY SYLLABLE OR TWO LIGHT SYLLABLES ON THE SAME SIDE OF IT; and this would be an example of Equivalence, and we may join hands with the classicists; see Appendix F. I believe that in the lighter trisyllabic rhythms this should be made the rule, and that its infractions should appear as exceptions.

§ 15. The difficulties in the application of such a rule are these: First, the uncertain and even varying length of some of these syllables; e. g. in the common phrases  $\overline{I}$   $\overset{\wedge}{am}$   $\overset{\wedge}{com}\overset{\wedge}{ing}$ ,  $\overline{they}$   $\overset{\wedge}{are}$   $\overset{\wedge}{go}\overset{\wedge}{ing}$ , the pronouns *I* and *they* are undoubtedly to be classed with the heavy syllables; but in common speech the phrases in which they occur are so subject to contraction, as in *I'm* and *they're*, that in comic verse, like Clough's, they are rightly admitted. Their frequent occurrence, however, when

written uncontracted, tends to lower the standard of the fluency of the verse, and leads to the admission of units of like weight, which cannot be so well explained in theory, or got over in reading.

Secondly, a very difficult question arises, which affects equally all those units where the stress is apparently overlaid on one side or other, and concerning which I do not find it possible to make a clear definition : it is this, how far the refusal of a stress to carry the whole of its grammatical unit (see exx. 22, 25, 26) will cause the thrown-off syllable or syllables to attach themselves to another stress : or, in other words, how far the stresses may be relied on to carry their proper metrical complements *independently of the grammar*. I believe the answer to be that this depends on the style in which the verse is written ; and while in common colloquial language (such as is the greater part of Clough's comic poems) the grammar must assert itself very strongly, yet in a higher poetic diction (even such as Shelley's *Sensitive Plant*) the grammar readily gives way to the versification. If this is true, then where the grammar is most stringent, there the liberty of treating these difficult heavy syllables freely by contraction and hastening is greatest ; while just in those cases where they cannot be contracted without disgracing the style, the questionable syllables may be resolved into other stresses.

Thirdly, a question is likely to arise as to how far the weight of syllables is relative—i.e. whether, when the stress is on a very heavy syllable, it will carry more than it will when on a light one. When stress and weight are combined they may make a more commanding element of rhythm ; but,

on the other hand, when the stress falls on a short syllable there is evidently more spare time in the foot to devote to heavy syllables, if the whole foot be regarded as a time-unit. These are points which I must be content to indicate. It is well to train the ear before trusting it.

Fourthly, it must be decided as to how far the fiction of *elision* is to be allowed. Such a line as

(14) Only<sup>3</sup> overhead the sweet nightringale

is by our rules good or bad according as the *elision* is allowed or not. It pleases me.

The main difficulty however lies undoubtedly in the uncertain length of these light longs, and the indisposition of English writers, either to oppose their tendency to intrude, or to allow them their true length; for it is owing to this leniency towards them that so little of our stressed verse is satisfactory to read, or possible to refer to as a model. The lightness or heaviness of the more doubtful syllables can only be a question of use, and one wishes that the practice were better and stricter.

§ 16. Finally, there is no doubt that this stress-prosody is fit for much heavier rhythms than those which we are considering; and that in such heavier rhythms heavier units or feet would be allowed, though, as these come in, secondary or subordinate accents will appear. A study of Shelley's very beautiful early poem, 'Away, the moor is dark beneath the moon,' will illustrate what I mean. The scheme, on which this poem is written, is one of four main or double stresses in the line; but, if read with due gravity, it will show generally

six accents, and sometimes five or seven. Shelley was of course conscious that the various stress-rhythms with which he was, so to speak, counterpointing the original measure, were destructive of its singsong framework : for instance

(15)  $\overset{\wedge}{\text{Rapid}}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{\text{clouds}}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{\text{have}}$   $\overset{\wedge}{\text{drunk}}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{\text{the}}$   $\overset{\wedge}{\text{last}}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{\text{pale}}$   $\overset{\wedge}{\text{beam}}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{\text{of}}$   $\overset{\wedge}{\text{even}}$

is convincing and extremely fine, whereas

$\overset{\wedge}{\text{Rapid}}$  clouds have drunk | the  $\overset{\wedge}{\text{last}}$  pale beam of  $\overset{\wedge}{\text{even}}$

is altogether unworthy ; and so of most of the lines.

† The scheme of the first line, which looks like a common syllabic 'iambic' line, of five places, is this :

(16)  $\overset{\wedge}{\text{Away}}$ , the  $\overset{\wedge}{\text{moor}}$  | is  $\overset{\wedge}{\text{dark}}$  beneath the  $\overset{\wedge}{\text{moon}}$ .

And any one who would read this poem aloud, or the one next mentioned, must be acquainted with the skeleton scheme of four double stresses and the break in the mid-line, and give indication of these, as may be done by keeping just in touch with the musical-time accent (the musical scheme being four beats in the bar, with the double stress always on the first beat). The variants of the counterpointed rhythms are purposely elaborated towards the end, with a great effect of luxuriance ; but the two lines here scanned with the double accent will enable any one to scan the rest.

This most pathetic poem, the poet's wail of desolation on first feeling the wound from which his spirit never recovered, cannot be made the subject of dry metrical analysis without some apology. We shall find however more than exculpation, for in seeking some other example

of Shelley's use of this metre for comparison, we shall come upon the song of the sixth Spirit in the first act of *Prometheus* :

(17) 'Ah, <sup>//</sup>sister, desolation | is a <sup>//</sup>delicate thing.'

And it is a matter of no small interest to discover that when Shelley wrote that song it was his own desolation that was in his mind, and that he was recurring to the very same form in which the outburst of his despairing passion was first expended.

§ 17. In such heavier and freer measures (and this rule may be extended to the accentual hexameter) it will be found that the ear will tolerate the omission of a stress under certain conditions. As far as I know, the law is this :—

VII. IN SOME METRES WHEN FOUR, AND IN ANY METRE WHEN MORE THAN FOUR, UNSTRESSED SYLLABLES OCCUR TOGETHER, THEY WILL OCCUPY THE PLACE OF A STRESS, WHICH MAY BE SAID TO BE DISTRIBUTED OVER THEM ; AND A LINE IN WHICH SUCH A COLLECTION OF SYLLABLES OCCURS WILL LACK ONE OF ITS STRESSES.

## II.

If these are the simple primary laws of the lighter (so-called dactylic and anapaestic) forms of stressed verse—and they must be these or something very like them—then they must be the true account of the English 'accentual hexameter.' The rationale of that verse is that it substitutes six stresses or speech-accents, with their complements, for the six quantitative feet of the classic hexameter : it regards that hexameter as

a falling rhythm, and represents the trisyllabic dactyl by two unaccented syllables following their stress, and the spondee by one. Any attempt to supply the falling syllables of the dactyl with short syllables rather than long, or the spondees with long ones rather than short, seems a matter of taste, or a refinement of scholastic fancy.

As this English verse is built on stress, and neglects quantity, it is *absolutely certain* that it must come under the laws of stress and not of quantity. Any attempt at quantitative explanation will be futile; and if our laws of stress-prosody fail to explain it, then we must have laid them down wrongly, and we may test or correct them by it. But if, on the other hand, we find that it is well explained by our laws, then we shall have a simple and intelligible explanation in lieu of one that is both forced and unintelligible, and shall also establish the truth of our inductions.

Any one who has read, or tried to read\*, many of these 'hexameters' will remember that, while there are a majority of lines which read fairly well without halting, there are many that are very defective in rhythm; by which I mean that they offer no convincing rhythm to the ear. Among the former

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\* 'Tried to read' is true of most of this verse, and no one can have failed in the trial more thoroughly than I have. My quotations are from Clough because I have found him an exception, and am charmed with the sympathetic esprit of his *Bohémie* and *Amours*, in which he has handled aspects of life, the romance of which is very untractable to the Muse, and chosen for them a fairly satisfactory, though not a perfected form. If Clough did not quite know what he was doing in the versification (and if he had known, he could have used some of his liberties more freely, and others more sparingly), yet he of all men most certainly knew very well what he was not doing.

class (those that seem to scan) there are some that are extremely fluent, where all the unaccented syllables of the 'dactyls' are light, or even short; and sometimes the falling syllables of the spondees are long. Here is an example :

(18) Tibur is beautiful too, and the orchard slopes and the Anio.

And here is one really accentual, but made to scan on Latin rules :

(19) Out of a dark umbrage sounds also musical issued.

Such verses as these cannot offend any of our laws; all the feet are easily resolved into very simple stress-units. But among those that please there are also some which cannot be explained on the hypothesis of (even accentual) dactyl and spondee; and taking these as one class, and those which absolutely refuse to be read as another class, we shall find that the former are pleasing because they are good verses according to stress-prosody; while those which offend are offensive because they break the rules of stressed verse. I will give enough examples to enable any one to apply the test for himself.

The first line of *The Boshie* is a halting line :

(20) It was the afternoon and the sports were now at the ending.

This offends against rule II. There is a metrical accent in the first place (on *it*) instead of a speech-accent, and the verse will not read without distorting the intonation. The same fault occurs in the following verse :

(21) And she got | up from her | seat on the | rock putting | by  
her | knitting.

But if the accent be put on its proper place (on *got* instead of on *and*) the verse, though not praiseworthy, will read, and scan in stress-prosody.

And she got | up | from her seat | on the rock | putting by |  
her knitting.

Compare the final metrical units as differently explained by the two prosodies.

So I find in Longfellow's *Evangeline* :

(22) And they rode | slowly along through the | woods conversing  
together.

This halting line offends law II in the first foot, and law IV in his third. If the grammar happened to require a stress on *they*, the first place would be cured :

And they | rode slowly | along | through the wood | con-  
versing | together.

But the heavy syllable *through* belongs to *wood*, and, if read with that stress, will make the place halt ; whereas it refuses to be attached to *along*.

In order to exhibit plainly that the reason why this line halts in that place is not because there is a heavy syllable where there may not be one, but only that it is collocated by grammar with a wrong stress (as ruled by law V), compare the following line (again Longfellow), where the third place is identical in quantity ; and yet the verse reads well :

(23) So is it | best, John | Escaugh, we | will not | speak of it |  
further.

And observe that it reads well because the heavy syllable *taugh* is attached to its contiguous stress.

So is | it best, | John Estaugh, | we will not | speak of it |  
further.

The following verse from Clough reads quite well:

(24) Yea and | shall hodmen | in beershops | complain | of a glory |  
denied them.

But consider the grace of *beershopscompl* as a dactyl!

The following verse also scans in spite of a bad dactyl in the second place :

(25) Yes and I | feel the life|juices of | all the | world and the | ages.  
because its units will divide thus :

Yes and | I feel the | life|juices | of all | the world and | the ages.

*Lifejuices* does not refuse to part with its article ; and I think this line will serve for an example of how a little poetic diction will relax a grammatical bond (as explained above, § 15). The following line, which is in much the same metrical condition, halts because the diction is low, and the grammar-bond fast :

(26) Noble ladies their prizes adjudged for costume that was perfect.  
The word *for* will not leave *costume*, the stress of which is already fully occupied.

The following beautiful line,—

(27) Bright October was come, the misty, bright October.  
would be thus scanned on the classical system :

Bright Oc|tober was | come, the | misty, | bright Oc|tober.

Whereas, on the stress system it is thus :

Bright | October | was come, | the misty, | bright | October.

The following is a line which Clough would never have written, had he imagined himself to be making classical hexameters :

(18) With a mathematical score hangs out at Inverary.

This is of course irreducible to classic feet, but the verse reads well enough because it does not offend the laws of stressed verse ; though I do not know what is the correct division of *Inverary*

With a ma|thematical | score | hangs out | at In|verary.

This may lead to the remark that words of four or more syllables, which have two speech-stresses in them, are generally in this condition : though it is impossible that they should ever give rise to any difficulty or uncertainty of rhythm, they often refuse to be divided, or, which is the same thing, offer two equally satisfactory alternatives.

It appears from verses like the last that there is no objection to the occurrence of an unstressed syllable (or even of two short syllables) before the first stress of the line in these accentual hexameters, as some writers have perceived, and trusting to their ear have used it. It is of course quite in order in the prosody, though it has the effect of dispelling the last remnant of classic illusion.

PS. A few days after writing the above I came into possession of Professor Skeat's great edition of Chaucer, and read

his account of Chaucer's versification, and I find that he analyses English poetic rhythms with the very same units which I have given for the units of stressed prosody\*: his list of stress-units corresponds with that on p. 72 of my old book (77 of this) dealing only with disyllabic verse, and is incomplete for the same reason; but he draws no distinction between heavy and light syllables. I am glad to be able to quote the confirmation of so experienced an investigator, and I do not wish to criticize any part of his scheme; but what he has written makes it necessary to my purpose for me to explain very clearly that I do not myself consider that, as he would seem to say, these stress-units are the true account of the structure of *all* English verse. Chaucer's and Milton's verse, for instance, and the greater part of English verse, is mainly syllabic; and the grammar of its structure must be also mainly syllabic in principle, just as the grammar of 'accentual' verse must be accentual. And if any one should think to reply to this that all verse is both syllabic and accentual, and therefore refuse to distinguish between them, I would offer him the following considerations:—

When reading Milton's or Chaucer's ten-syllable verse aloud, the occurrence of a line which is deficient in one of the ten syllables (and such lines occur in Chaucer) is extremely awkward both for hearer and reader, especially if the latter is not prepared for it. It cannot escape observation: and if a line occurs in which there are more than ten syllables, the 'trissyllabic foot'

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\* It is on p. lxxxiii of the sixth volume dated 1894 and issued in the following year. The date of the first edition of my tract, which had some previous life as a manuscript, being 1893.

is readily perceived; so that of every line, as it is read, the hearer can say at once of how many syllables it was composed, whether of nine, ten, eleven or twelve. But he will not observe a variety in the number of stresses in the same way; whether the line have its full normal complement of five, or only four (as is very frequent), or only three, no awkwardness or interruption of rhythm will be perceived; nor will the hearer be able to say readily at the close of any line how many true stresses it contained. This is syllabic verse.

Of stressed verse exactly the contrary is true. The omission of an initial unaccented syllable from the line produces no awkwardness: hearer and reader alike are indifferent as to the number of syllables which go to make the line; nor, as each line is read, can they say how many syllables have gone to make it. But if a stress be omitted, they perceive the rhythm to be unsatisfactory, and readily detect the awkwardness of the false metrical stresses which they passed over in the syllabic verse. This is stressed or accentual verse.

# CLASSICAL METRES IN ENGLISH VERSE

A HISTORY & CRITICISM of the attempts hitherto made, together with a scheme for the determination of the QUANTITY OF ENGLISH SYLLABLES, based on their actual phonetic condition

by

WILLIAM JOHNSON STONE

*Late of King's College, Cambridge, & Assistant  
Master at Marlboro' College*



## CLASSICAL METRES IN ENGLISH VERSE

THE object of this paper will be to examine the question whether classical metres might find a place in our language not merely distantly similar to that which they held in Latin and Greek, but really and actually the same, governed by rules equally strict and perfect, and producing on the ear the same pure delight. Every one who has tried to write thus has failed. Either he has thrown quantity to the winds and written lines which resemble their models only in the number of the syllables and the exaggerated beat of the verse. Or he has felt himself so trammelled by rules of quantity that he has modified them and produced a hybrid which has the merits of neither. Or finally—and rarely—he has written perfect quantitative verse, but has been so hampered by English rules of accent that his writings have hardly reached one hundred lines.

Although in making this attempt I feel that I am exploring a desert white with the bones of distinguished predecessors and persistently shunned by the mass of sensible Englishmen, yet in the last fifty years some attempts have been made which mark very clearly the direction in which the road lies, if the journey is to be taken at all, and encourage me to hope

for fellow travellers. My hope is not very sanguine, but I think it may perhaps be possible to carry some with me as far as this:—that there is no other road and that any compromise is fatal.

Let me make my position quite clear at the outset by putting down my convictions on certain controversial points. I believe then—

1. That there is hardly any difference at all between accent as it is now and as it was in classical times; and that if it differs the difference is in degree, not in kind.

2. That classical writers did not deliberately in reading make their verses *read themselves*\*, in the meaning of the modern phrase; and that their words so read would have sounded as monstrous to them as the word *unexpectedly* pronounced *unexpectedly* would sound in English.

3. That English words, if pronounced accurately, have a distinct quantity, which is easily perceived by any one who will attend to it.

4. That the accent in English does *not* lengthen the syllable at all.

5. That our English ears are so vitiated by the combined effect of reading English accentuated verse and reading Latin and Greek without the true pronunciation or accentuation, that we are in general unable to detect quantity, and that the quantitative attempts of the greatest masters are often demonstrably unsound.

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\* That is, their aim in composing a beautiful verse was not to bring the speech-accent of a word to coincide always with the metrical accent. They liked and sought a disagreement or combat between them.

All these points will be dealt with in the course of this paper. I propose to begin by giving some account of the various attempts that have been made at different times to introduce classical metres, showing why in my opinion they have severally failed; then to examine some of the objections that have been raised generally against such attempts; and lastly to give suggestions for a quantitative English Prosody.

## I.

Dr. Guest (*A History of English Rhythms*, p. 550) describes the evolution of the modern accentual from the ancient quantitative metre somewhat in this manner. Goths and Celts from the beginning probably read the Latin poets without any feeling for quantity, but, at first at all events, with a clear idea of the rhythm of the lines, by which I suppose he means the rules which govern the breaks and the cutting up of the words. Subsequently this perception was lost and the line governed by accent alone.

Here we have the distinction between ancient and modern metre very clearly expressed, and Dr. Guest is absolutely convinced, as he shows further on, of a point of some importance, that in English rhythms the metre is entirely dependent on accent, quantity making no sort of difference. I would add a corollary to this, that accent and quantity are two entirely separate things, neither affecting the other in the smallest degree (except indirectly as I shall note further on), and I would define the difference between ancient and modern metres thus:—in the one the verse scans by quantity alone, the accent being used only as an ornament, to avoid

monotony: in the other the functions are exactly reversed, the accent deciding scansion, the quantity giving variety. The final result on the ear I believe to be very much the same, but whereas we attend (theoretically) to accent exclusively and are only unconsciously affected by quantity, with the ancients the position was reversed.

I know that what I have just said will not be readily accepted. Professor Mayor, for instance, holds the belief that the ancients were like children, who, as soon as they get a rhythm into their heads, love to emphasize it. But to look upon classical metres as something more elementary than ours, seems to me a monstrous absurdity. I know too that my thesis is likely to become more distasteful to many, the further it proceeds to its logical conclusion; but since the subject is one on which there has been nothing but diversity of opinion and wanton inconsistency in the various statements of those who have undertaken to explain it, a simple and consistent account of the matter should find an audience. If then I shall be found to condemn scansions of words which seem perfectly correct to most people, if I outrage the ears not only of the uneducated but much more, as I am afraid, of the highly cultured, I beg the reader's confidence until he reach the end.

The great movement in the direction of classical metres came, as might have been expected, at the Renaissance, when the spread of knowledge revealed the vast superiority of the Latin poetry. It died out when the work of our great Elizabethan dramatists and poets had produced something of original excellence in our own language sufficient to counterbalance this superiority. While the movement lasted it

engaged the serious attention of the greatest *littérateurs* of the day, but it was always a failure, and deserved the ridicule heaped upon it by Nash\*. Not that it was altogether misdirected. Webbe had sound ideas on the subject, and Fraunce produced some very pleasant verses. But its exponents had in some cases all the roughness of Ennius and in no case an approach to his correctness of scansion. Not one was able to throw away the enthrallment of accent except in partial and therefore worse than useless instances. Not one could disabuse himself of certain utterly fallacious correspondences between Latin and English, or naturally feel the true phonetic value and quantity of the syllable. At the same time they wrote prosodies (none of which except that of Stanihurst seems to be procurable) and were really anxious to obtain definite rules of scansion.

The first attempt I can find to write accurate quantitative verse consists of two lines, written by Dr. Watson, Master of St. John's, Cambridge, and quoted by Ascham in *The Schoolmaster* :—

All travellers do gladly report great prayse of Ulysses  
For that he knew many men's maners and saw many cities;

which were regarded as perfect by Ascham, Gabriel Harvey, and Webbe, but in which it is easy to point out false quanti-

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\* 'The Hexameter verse I graunt to be a Gentleman of an auncient house (so is many an English beggar) yet this Clyme of ours hee cannot thrive in; our speech is too craggy for him to set his plough in; hee goes twitching and hopping in our language like a man running upon quagmires, up the hill in one Syllable, and down the dale in another, retaining no part of that stately smooth gate which hee vaunts himselfe with amongst the Greeks and Latins.'—Nash, in *Four Letters Confuted*.

ties :—*hē, māners, cities*. Still *travellers* is a creditable anapaest. Ascham himself appears to have made some attempts, but the inventor of the English hexameter by his own account was Gabriel Harvey, who was made a Doctor of Laws in Cambridge in 1585. This man, a person of inordinate conceit, published in 1580 his correspondence with Spenser on 'versifying,' as Spenser called it, in which he figures as the adviser and corrector of his younger friend.

In these letters it is shown quite clearly that Spenser was very much in earnest; 'Why a God's name,' he says, 'may not we as else the Greekes have the kingdome of our own language, and measure our accentres by the sounde, reserving that quantity to the verse?'—a phrase which I confess I do not understand. Moreover he talks of a prosody, which Sidney had taken from Dr. Drant (the translator of Horace) and which had been supplemented by Sidney and himself. This he is anxious to correct by comparison with Harvey's views. His own specimens certainly leave something to be desired. Here is a translation of Sardanapalus' epitaph :—

That which I eate did I joy, and that which I greedily gorged:  
As for those many goodly matters leaft I for others;

which it is satisfactory to learn was an extempore effort made in bed. 'Goodly' is intended to scan as a spondee. So are 'matters' and 'others.' A more serious effort began :—

See ye the blind-foulded pretty god, that feathered Archer,  
in which we see with satisfaction a combative accent in *blind-foulded* and *pretty*, but false quantities in *ye* and *feathered*.

The accent however was evidently a great difficulty to Spenser: *carpenter* he says must be scanned with second sylla-

ble long although it is short in speech, a significant phrase as we shall see later. This seemed to him 'like a lame gosling that draweth one leg after hir.'

I do not intend here to deal with this great stumbling-block, but I think it will be useful before going further to notice two errors, which have I believe more than any other infected quantitative verse. Their recognition will condemn almost any five consecutive verses that have ever been written in this manner. The first is that of making a vowel followed by a double consonant long by position. Any one who considers the matter for a moment must see how utterly fallacious this lengthening is. Why for instance should the first syllable of *hitting* be longer than *hit*? The doubling of a letter in English has no other purpose than the marking of the preceding vowel as short, except where it is a survival of the Latin spelling, and in one or two cases to be mentioned presently. Moreover, where it preserves the Latin spelling, it does not of course preserve the Latin pronunciation. For it can hardly be doubted that in Latin both consonants were pronounced, as they are now in Italian, and as we pronounce them in some English words\*.

The second cardinal error is connected with the scansion of monosyllables with open vowels. There are in my opinion only three or four such that may be scanned short, and they only because they are enclitics or proclitics. Taken by themselves they are long. They are *a*, *to*, *the*, and sometimes *be*

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\* Words like *innate*, *unnatural*, *shrilly*, *cruelly*, *dissatisfaction*, are instances where we do make the vowel long by position. There are not many such and they are easily distinguishable. But see p. 162, § 21.

and *me*\*. Yet all writers have made use of the extraordinary licence of allowing all such words to be common. Even Tennyson has *my* short: yet *my* is a diphthong. I believe that these two mistakes only need to be pointed out, yet it is unaccountable that they should not at least have been mentioned before.

Harvey, in his answer to his young friend 'Immerito,' expresses a desire to see the spelling of English so modified and crystallized that it may be used as a guide to scansion. How necessary was some check on the vagaries of Elizabethan spelling we shall see in Stanihurst's case. Now that our spelling is fixed, I can only say that it is a terribly unsafe guide and must be kept in the background. Harvey then gives several specimens of his own versifying, one of which begins—

What might I call this tree? A laurell? O bonny laurell,  
which allowing for every possible alteration in pronunciation can hardly have scanned accurately.

Moreover Harvey has some very amusing and trenchant things to say about *carpenter*. He ridicules with great gusto all such long syllables, and is finally compelled to say: 'Position neither maketh shorte nor long in our tongue, but so far as we can get hir good leave' (i.e. that of 'the vulgar and naturall Mother Prosodye'). He feels that this dictum is the deathblow of any scientific treatment of scansion, and adds that he hopes some day that a principle equipollent and countervailing may be found in the English tongue. For myself I am not sanguine on this point, and fail to see that position

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\* See p. 157, § 5.

has less force now than formerly, though Harvey has the majority on his side. It is not surprising at all events that this letter put Spenser finally out of sympathy with 'versifying.'

Sir Philip Sidney, in spite of Harvey's own words, was not I believe indebted to him for his metrical rules. He uses *solemnise* at the end of a hexameter, which would seem to show that he did not agree with Harvey's judgement on *carpenter* \*. But his verses contain extraordinary perversions of natural rules. He shows a laudable desire to neglect accent, but this has been done at the expense of the true quantity of the syllables. Take the line—

Then by my high cedars, rich rubie and only shining sun.

Can anything be more perverse than the quantity of *shining*? I suppose if the *n* were doubled he would scan it long; for Sidney does not of course escape the doubled consonant fallacy.

Sidney's 'versifying' was a very unsatisfactory production. But he wrote largely and was sanguine about the future of the movement. He declared his belief that English was better fitted than any other vulgar language for both sorts of versifying, the modern and the ancient.

Stanihurst's Virgil (1582) is a unique and delightful production. Its eccentricities need not detain us however. What is important is that he formulated rules of quantity, and that the combative accent is distinctly and successfully used to

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\* A matter of no importance: but *solemnise* was not at that date in quite the same condition as *carpenter*; it was still heard accented on the penultimate: and thus Shakespeare, *L. L. L.* ii. i. 42, though in all other places *solemnise*. See *Per. Lost*, vii. 448: and, for an account of the change of accent of words in *ize*, Abbott's *Shakespearean Grammar*, 491.

retard the hurrying hexameter. For all his faults Stanihurst's verses read to me more like hexameters than any others I have seen, except those in Clough's *Attaeon* and some written by Mr. James Spedding. Here are one or two random lines:—

And the godesse Juno full freight with poysoned envye.  
With thundring lightnings my carcase strongly beblasted.  
Wasd for this, moother, that mee through danger unharmed?

But lines without false quantities are few and far between. For Stanihurst, like the majority of Englishmen, was under the fatal impression that English vowels have no fixed and unalterable quantity. He has only to double the consonant in order to lengthen the vowel, or worse still, to double the vowel. He can thus give a satisfaction to the eye, which with our limited orthography is denied us, but he is constantly offending the ear. We laugh when Stanihurst writes—

Flee, fle, my sweet darling,  
or—

with rounce rebel hobble,

the former the beginning, the latter the end, of a hexameter; but we are most of us still under the impression that we may scan a vowel long or short as we will.

In 1586 appeared William Webbe's *Discourse on English Poetry*. He was a private tutor and a very well-read man. His opinion is clearly stated that classical metres ought to be transferred to English. He says he is fully and certainly persuaded that if the true kind of versifying had been transplanted into English and become habitual, as the Latin was borrowed from the Greek, it would have attained as high a perfection as in any other tongue. As it is, he promises we shall not find the

English words so gross and unapt, but that they will fit into metre and run thereon somewhat currently. In another place he declares that though our words cannot be forced to abide the touch of position (here we see the influence of Harvey), yet there is such a natural force or quantity in each word that it will not abide any place but one. This assurance I look upon as very valuable. It was shared as we shall see by Lord Tennyson. But in examining the quantities of words, Webbe shows all the usual weaknesses. The monosyllables with open vowels are to be short, with the curious exception of 'we': and when we come to his own attempts, a translation of the two first Eclogues and a transposition of some of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* into Sapphics, there is very little satisfaction to be found for the ear, quite apart from the extreme clumsiness of the style. Here is a Sapphic stanza:—

Shew thyself, now Cynthia, with thy cleere rayes  
And behold her: never abasht be thou so;  
When she spreads those beams of her heav'nly beauty, how  
Thou art in a dump dasht;

which is interesting only as being framed on the Greek model. Notice the elisions, which I regard as a mistake, the shortened monosyllables, and that there is very little attempt to play accent against quantity.

One more Elizabethan experimenter and the series comes to an abrupt end. This was Abraham Fraunce, a protégé of Sidney, referred to in flattering terms by Spenser in the *Shepherd's Calendar*. I believe it is a fact that he wrote no other poetry, and his attempts are the only ones that seem to me to deserve the name of poetry at all, though they are scarcely

more correct than those of his contemporaries. He wrote an account of the Nativity and the Crucifixion in what he called rhyming hexameters. The rhyme is of the suppressed order, but the verses are some of them of great beauty. I transcribe the opening ten lines:—

Christe ever-lyving, once dying, only triumphher  
 Over death by death; Christ Jesus mighty redeemer  
 Of forlorne mankynde, which led captyvyty captive  
 And made thraldome thrall; whose grace and mercy defensive  
 Merciles and graceless men sav'd; Christ lively redeemer  
 Of sowles oppressed with sin; Christ lovely reporter  
 Of good spell Gospell, Mayds son, celestial ofspring,  
 Emanuel, man-god, Messyas, ever abounding  
 With pity perpetual, with pure love, charity lively.  
 This Christ shall be my song and my meditation only.

There are about ten false quantities here, and there is a tendency, which grows afterwards more marked, to emphasize the rhythm by putting a monosyllable before the break. Many will agree with me in picking out 'Merciles and graceless,' and 'With pity perpetual' as the most perfect beginnings in these lines, and very few I hope will say with Ben Jonson, 'Abram Francis in his English hexameters was a fool.'

With all this various talent and energy devoted to its beginning, how was it that Webbe's ideal of a gradually perfected English prosody was so far from being realized? One reason, no doubt, was the extraordinary richness of the Elizabethan age in verse of the other sort. These poor little efforts which, regarded as poetry, were not generally worth much attention, were completely swamped. No one who read the *Fairy Queen* could tolerate for a moment Spenser's dull, awkward hexameters. They met besides with violent opposition from

Harvey's personal enemy Nash. But the two main reasons I take to have been these. First, that they were in each case a compromise ; they do not scan perfectly, and accent plays too important a part. Secondly, there were people even in those days as unconscious of the meaning of quantity and its difference from accent as the generality of people now. The extent to which this was the case I have found illustrated with unexpected simplicity by George Puttenham in his *Art of English Poetrie*, which appeared in 1589, in fact just at the most fruitful period of metrical experiments. Here is a man who honestly believes that the only criterion of the length of a syllable is its accent, who has no suspicion of the difference between 'length of tone,' 'strength of tone,' and 'height of tone.'

He begins his chapter by saying that though English is not very well fitted, being a monosyllabic language, for classical feet, and though such innovations are unwelcome to wise and grave men, yet for the benefit of the young and curious he intends to show how such feet may be commodiously led into our language. For this purpose, though it may offend the ears of the over-dainty, we must keep our ordinary pronunciation, remembering to allow to every polysyllable word one long time of necessity, namely, where the accent falls. This is bad enough, but Puttenham could do worse ; he proceeds thus with his teaching : 'Wherein we would not follow the licence of the Greeks and Latines, who made not their sharpe accentte any necessary prolongation of their times, but used such sillable sometimes long, sometimes short, at their pleasure.' This fantastic misconception he afterwards modifies, but only by a further instalment of folly. We must not, he says, attempt to

model our scansion on Latin and Greek, because they did not use accent as their standard. What then was their standard? Not, as he seems to imply above, the caprice of the particular writer, but the pre-election of the first poets, who decided the matter, as he thinks, 'at their pleasure or as it fell out.' This last phrase, at first sight mysterious, he hastens to explain. Homer must be imagined as beginning his line with the word 'Penelope,' which consequently had to take the shape Pēnēlōpē, nothing in the world appearing why *pe* should be longer than *ne* or *lo*, all being equally smooth and current upon the tongue. He has a similar explanation for the scansion of the first line of the *Aeneid*; he that first put such words into verse having found, as it is to be supposed, a more sweetness to have the *a* of *cano* timed short, and the *o* of *oris* long. In fact the whole system of quantity is entirely dependent on tradition, which he compares to theological traditions of an untrustworthy sort.

I am very grateful to Puttenham for the lengths to which he has carried his principles. He makes the attitude of those who deny the existence of quantity in English, once for all and to the last degree absurd.

From the Elizabethans is a far cry to Robert Southey, yet we have to make the jump before any real revival takes place. I have no serious quarrel with Southey or with his very numerous imitators. He founded a school—in England at least: the experiment had long before been tried in Germany—as he himself claims, with the words—

I first adventure, follow me who list.

For though the idea was not at all new, it was he who gave it its impulse in the simple and rational direction which it took.

He adopts in fact Puttenham's suggestion that we should scan hexameter lines by accent alone. He even falls apparently into Puttenham's delightful confusion, but I am ready to believe that the mistake is only in words. He says 'the dactyl consists of one long syllable and two short ones, as exemplified in the name *Wellington*.' He does not of course mean *long* and *short*, but *accented* and *unaccented*. But I do not, as I say, wish to quarrel with Southey. His system seems to me perfectly legitimate, though it may offend the ears of many;—it was hateful, for instance, to Tennyson. It is simply this (I do not use his own words on account of the confusion noted above):—do away with quantity altogether as a basis of metre, and make every dactyl an accented and two unaccented syllables, every spondee one accented and one unaccented. This last foot, as he justly observes, is better called 'a trochee. The reason why a spondee is an impossibility as a basis in such verses, is explained by Dr. Guest (on page 551 of his book): consecutive syllables in one word cannot both have the accent, so that a true accentual English spondee is only possible with two monosyllables.

On these simple lines Southey framed his metre, and his work has borne fruit, some of it well worth producing. But why should he claim to be grafting the classical system on the English language? An Englishman who had never read a word of Latin or Greek might very well have invented such a metre\* and thrown in a rhyme or two into the bargain.

Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of barley,

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\* A rationale of this accentual verse on simple English principles is given on pp. 88 and foll. of this volume.

will make one of Southey's hexameters, a decidedly spondaic, or rather trochaic specimen, it is true. Or take these lines from Swinburne—

Yea, is not even Apollo, with hair and harp-string of gold,  
A bitter god to follow, a beautiful god to behold?

The fatal objection to this form of verse to my mind is the incomparable ease with which lines can be reeled off by anybody, and the inability which it has hitherto shown to attain anything like artistic elaboration, such as has perfected our blank verse. It has even betrayed a disgust of its own rules: Coleridge, for instance, found it necessary to check it by intentional harshness, so overpowering was the flow of it.

As used by Southey, Coleridge, Kingsley, Longfellow, Clough (in the *Bohrie*), and Matthew Arnold, there would be no objection to the so-called hexameter as an English metre, if it could only develop on its own rhythmical principles. But it must not be compared with or called the classical hexameter, nor be used, as Matthew Arnold wished it to be used, to translate Homer. It is when similar imitations are made of the shorter and more delicate classical metres—imitations which appeal to classical scholars, and have no claim to exist except that of reproducing classical form and effect—that the travesty calls for censorship. Coleridge's hendecasyllables, with twelve syllables to the line, and without an approach to the true scansion, must shock any one acquainted with the original. If however they had been given a different name, their pretension to represent the classical metre would have escaped notice, and they might perhaps justify themselves on

their own merits: that is the question which they raise, and it does not concern us here.

I have just alluded to Matthew Arnold's translations of Homer, and though they cannot find a place except under the Southey group, the views of so eminent an authority, expressed in one or two lectures *On Translating Homer*, must not be overlooked. He is chiefly concerned with Homer's diction and the manner of its reproduction in English, on which points I suppose his judgement is final. But he also examines critically the various metres in which Homer has been translated, and decides that there is only one which can be used appropriately—the hexameter. This is a conclusion which I need not say I am glad to have expressed. But of what sort is the hexameter to be? He is quite explicit: 'they must read themselves'; in other words, the accent must be an absolute guide: the intention of the writer must never be in doubt.

This universal rule, which however he afterwards modifies to give variety to the first-foot, is a perfectly sound rule for the Southey hexameter. Even for quantitative verse the intention of the writer must of course never be in doubt, nor I maintain is it, if rules of prosody be strictly observed. But we shall see presently what Calverley's opinion was of the words 'they must read themselves,' applied to imitations of classical metres. For the present I would notice one more point in Matthew Arnold's essay. He feels strongly the drawbacks of his metre: in Longfellow's hands, he says, it is at its best elegant, at its worst lumbering. In plain words it is undignified, and though this may perhaps be overcome in some measure by using spondees—or as he ought to call them trochees—more freely,

yet I think it says the last word for the Southey hexameter as in any sense an equivalent for the classical. This may be surely affirmed without denying the beauty of many of Matthew Arnold's own lines, or of those few pleasing hexameters which Dr. Hawtrey wrote.

The prophecy of a coming translator of Homer contained in these lectures was fulfilled. In the next year (1862) at least three attempts appeared. I refer to those of Dart, Herschell, and Cochrane. Two of these writers were apparently seized with certain very natural misgivings in their use of the English hexameter. Mr. Dart could not bear to scan the classical names on Southey principles, e. g. Pēnēlōpē. Mr. Cochrane, again, was appalled by the substitution of the trochee for the spondee, so that his verse abounds with such words as *wind-swept*, used not without success to add dignity to the verse. The misgivings of both mark a slight reaction in favour of quantitative verse; but they are entirely irrational, and were justly censured in *Macmillan's Magazine* by Dr. Whewell. Given the accentuated hexameter, Southey's rules are, as far as they go, perfectly sound. Half measures are impossible.

It will be as grateful to the reader as to me to arrive at something with which I can be in agreement: hitherto my task has been very little beyond trying to expose what I think to be fallacies, and I have found myself in conflict with every one. But in the last half-century there have been movements of a very different character, and names of authority to which I can appeal. The three stones at the base of my column are Clough, Tennyson, and Calverley. Separately each would be a very doubtful prop, but collectively they form a solid founda-

tion. I shall also have the pleasure of noticing my one predecessor.

Clough's short experiments are among the best, and they are practically unique, at least among modern writers, in one respect. He has really tried to make a scientific use of the ordinary accent to lend variety to the rhythm. Is not this pentameter perfect?—

Now with mighty vessels loaded, a lordly river.

In this verse we actually find a tacit acknowledgement that two *s*'s do not necessarily make the preceding vowel long; but, alas, he is as far as any one from seeing that they never do. How is it possible that a man should have written the above and in the same poem 'thou busy sunny river,' with the belief that the first syllable of *sunny* is longer than that of *busy* or *river*? It implies a really extraordinary clinging to a classical rule that has no sort of bearing on our language, and is the more deplorable in Clough because he trembles on the very edge of discovery. He writes *passage*; and even treats as single those true double consonants which are made by the final and initial of contiguous words:—

quickly will lend thee passage

is the end of one of his pentameters, and a very bad end too; for such coalescing is a conversational licence, and *thee* is of course long. Again, while we have a line beginning 'Boughs with apples laden,' perfect in my judgement; in the same poem *uttering* is a dactyl.

I should like very much to know what Clough himself had to say about these verses of his, and what effect he intended

the accent to have. He goes so far as to end a hexameter with—

nor therefore less the forest through,

which, as his lines are I think intended to be Virgilian, could not be paralleled by many lines in his model : and again with hideous perversity—

she thither arrived,

where *arrived* scans as a spondee. Though I must rule his quantities often very faulty, these experiments of his are more like what I imagine classical metres were to their readers, than almost any others.

I turn with particular pleasure to Tennyson, not so much for the experiments that appear in his works as for certain *obiter dicta* to be found in *Tennyson, A Memoir*. He was a great precisian and an accurate artist, and so it is not surprising to find that he had a good hatred for hexameters of the Southey class and especially for those of the Germans. He insisted on rigid adherence to the proper scansion of a word in any attempt at classical metre, and it is his authority that I have found most encouraging in plunging into this subject.

He has left three poems, in elegiacs, in hendecasyllables, and in alcaics, very carefully and accurately worked out, not to mention *Boadicea*, which has only a distant resemblance to galliambics and does not conform to strict rules of scansion\*. They do not give me very much satisfaction. We know that Tennyson in reading his poems emphasized the beat of the verse in a way that would have been found intolerable in any one else. It

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\* Calverley notes that the words 'tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, gentleman, apothecary,' make a correct Tennysonian galliambic.

is strictly in accordance with this principle that his metrical experiments have the accents consistently, with only one or two exceptions, coinciding with the metrical ictus. This method must, I think, be fatal, if only on account of the monotony and the extreme difficulty of writing it. More than half the polysyllabic words in the English language would have to be tabooed.

But it is evident that to Tennyson's ear there was something grotesque in such verses as observe classical quantity and at the same time admit the classical liberty of combative accent. He seems to have attempted them, but only in a playful spirit: he thought that even quantitative hexameters were as a rule fit only for comic subjects. He quotes the conclusion of an alcaic stanza—

Thine early rising well repaid thee,  
Munificently rewarded artist,

where it is a relief to find one combative accent; and this pentameter—

All men alike hate slops, particularly gruel,  
which nearly brings tears into my eyes, not because of the base uses to which he is putting the metre, but because he scans *gruel* with the *u* short, one of the most persistent and easily traceable blunders. As a fact I believe there is in English no accented vowel shortened before another vowel. But this I shall deal with later. Coleridge's well-known couplet is corrected by Tennyson to—

Up springs hexameter with might as a mountain ariseth:  
Lightly the fountain falls, lightly the pentameter;

which scans perfectly, but I would ask whether the excessive insistence on the rhythm is not a fault, and whether the

ancients were not right in their rule about a monosyllable before the break.

On page 231 of the second volume we find Tennyson's assertion that he believed he knew the quantity of every word in the English language except *scissors*. It is this assertion that is most valuable to me in Tennyson's remarks on the subject. I believe with him that every syllable in the English language has a definite quantitative value apart altogether from accent. But why this grotesque exception of *scissors*? I think it probable that, as in the case of *gruel* mentioned above, he may have been entrapped by the desire of saying something whimsical.

Tennyson, in spite of *scissors* and *gruel*, was I am sure on the right track with regard to quantity. He has a false quantity in the words 'Time or Eternity' in the alcaic ode, and is guilty of the common mistake of scanning *my*, *me*, &c., short. Whether he was sound on the subject of doubled consonants I cannot tell. He seems to have avoided them instinctively except in the word *Caesullus*, where perhaps Homeric lengthening would be excusable. In spite of his opinion that purely quantitative verse is comic, he has done more perhaps than any one to show that an exact English quantitative prosody is a possibility.

The authority which Clough gives me for accent, and Tennyson for quantity, Calverley will give me for rhythm. His views are to be found in a letter to *The London Students*, published in his *Literary Remains*.

He is answering a writer, who maintained that classical translations ought to reproduce the metre of the original, instancing Tennyson's attempts as an illustration of the way in

which metre should be treated in English. Calverley maintains, apart from quantity altogether, that if the verse scans itself—falls necessarily and obviously, that is, into the metre—it is *ipso facto* a bad verse from a classical standpoint. When, he says, Tennyson writes—

Calm as a mariner out in ocean,

though the scansion is unexceptional (this is untrue; and Tennyson did not write and would not have written *mariner* as a dactyl), the line is condemned by one of the elementary rules of lyric scansion. He then points out that all such arbitrary rules of Latin rhythm as the rule of the caesura, of the monosyllable before the break, &c., are explicable on one ground only, and can be assigned to but one object, namely, the prevention of self-scanning verses. There is no pentameter, he notes, in the whole Latin tongue, ending in a single monosyllable.

So far, and in his criticism of such dactyls as ‘trembled the,’ ‘Romans be,’ ‘turn the helm,’ ‘silenced but,’ he is admirable. But the page is turned and the illusion gone. He is not only out of accord with Tennyson in regard to rhythm, but in regard to quantity also. He objects to the second syllable of *organ-voice* being scanned long, when he has just made the remark ‘*helm* and *realm* are as distinctly long syllables as any can be.’ Why are their vowels long except by position? In what respect then do the syllables differ from *-ganu-* in length? *nu* retards the voice quite as much as *lm*. The answer comes only too certainly; it is because there is no accent on the second syllable of *organ*. How, in the world then, we must ask, did he intend to avoid insistence on rhythm, if the unac-

cented syllables were still to be counted short, and the accented long? If it is simply a question of not dividing the words exactly into dactyls and spondees, though that is something, surely we shall still have the verses reading themselves and the rhythm accentuated in the very manner that he was deprecating.

Later on he quotes to condemn, where I am entirely with him, the pentameter—

Joyous knight-errant of God, thirsting for labour and strife.

It is a shockingly bad line to classical ears, but it is not wrong on Calverley's principles : for it divides naturally thus—

Joyous—knight-errant—of God—thirsting—for labour—and strife,  
which is unobjectionable on Latin rules, except that the two halves balance one another with too great exactitude.

Finally let me say Calverley's own specimens do not seem to me to differ in respect of reading themselves or in any other way from Southey's, e. g.

Shines forth every cliff and the jutting peaks of the headlands.

It will be seen that my ~~these~~ foundation stones are very much in the position of the combatants in a triangular duel, but they form together a solid base. It now remains only to consider my one predecessor, whom I was as much surprised as pleased to discover.

This is Mr. James Spedding, who in *Fraser's Magazine* for July, 1861, wrote a criticism on Matthew Arnold's lectures, especially attacking the Southey hexameter. I may say at once that my views are almost exactly in accordance with his ; and the way in which his remarks were received by Matthew

Arnold and Mr. H. A. J. Munro prepares me for the sort of criticism that I may expect. Still he had not my triangular foundation to support him.

Here is a significant passage: '*Slumbers* is a word of two long syllables with the accent on the first; *supper* is a word of two short syllables, also with the accent on the first. *Bittern* has its first syllable short but accented, its second long but unaccented. *Quantity* is a dactyl: *quiddity* is a tribrach. *Rapidly* is a word to which we find no parallel in Latin. The degrees of length being infinite in number, there are of course many syllables which are doubtful or common. . . . But in general you can tell the quantity of every syllable at once if you will only listen for it, and may soon learn to be as much shocked by a false quantity in English, as if you knew it to be against a written rule.

Sweetly cometh slumber, closing the o'erwearied eyelid,  
is a correct Virgilian hexameter, like

*Ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores.*

Sweetly falleth slumber, closing the wearied eyelid,  
contains two shocking false quantities.'

Further, Mr Spedding notes the doubled consonant fallacy, observing that when we wish to distinguish between *annus* and *anus* in Latin, we do so by pronouncing *anus* like *canus*; and since we do not pronounce double *n* in *annus*, but only use it, in our English fashion, to shorten the *a*, we actually pronounce the short vowel long, and the long vowel short in order to distinguish between them! To give another example; many excellent scholars will read '*arma virumque cano*' with the *a* of *cano* distinctly long, thinking of it all the while as short; whereas

if the word were written *canno*, they would pronounce it short, and consider it long.

Mr. Spedding models his verse confessedly on Virgil, and I think that he is justified in claiming that it is like Virgil's in effect. But he is also right in saying that Virgilian hexameters are almost impossible in English. Our words are not like Latin words, our accents are also very different: the Latin accent, for instance, never came on the last syllable of a word. This fact is in itself, I think, fatal to the English Virgil. Practically every line of Virgil ends with a dactyl and a spondee in which quantity and accent coincide, as they do invariably in Mr. Spedding's lines—

Verses so modulate, so tuned, so varied in accent,  
Rich with unexpected changes, smooth, stately, sonorous,  
Rolling ever forward, tidelike, with thunder, in endless  
Procession, complex melodies—pause, quantity, accent  
After Virgilian precedent and practice, in order  
Distributed—could these gratify th' Etonian ear-drum?

Virgil my model is: accent, caesura, division:  
His practice regulates, his rules my quantity obeyeth.

but these lines are of course quite un-English in sound. He has been at great pains to choose words which resemble Latin words in quantity and accent, and has I think been successful in producing a very Virgilian effect. The second line is the best, the last two are the worst: the elision quite intolerable. There are two or three false quantities.

Now hear for a moment what objections were raised against Mr. Spedding by Mr. Munro (in 1861). He declared that neither his ear nor his reason could recognize 'any real distinction of quantity *except that which is produced by accented*

and unaccented syllables.' This is of course just the healthy scepticism which one would expect to result from such a pronunciation of Latin as I have described two pages back (with examples of *annus*, *anus* and *cano*); but considering the condition of phonetic science, it is incredible that any one should be willing to make the confession. It seems to me pure *Puttenham*, and to require as a proper continuation a disquisition on how the Greeks came by their scansion of *Penelope*. 'Quantity,' he says, 'must be utterly discarded.' Well, some may consider that a sufficiently good working hypothesis for English accentuated metres. It is a consistent attitude with regard to the English hexameter, preferable in my opinion to Arnold's, who was prepared to meet Mr. Spedding half way. He said he would not scan *seventeen* as a dactyl (though on his own principles it is admissible), but that he thought most people incapable of Mr. Spedding's nicety of ear; that they would be unable to feel the difference between *quantity* and *quiddity*. I should have thought, but for such unexpected authority to the contrary, that there did not live a man who, if the question were fairly put to him, could fail to detect the difference.

## II.

Study of the history of these various attempts, the survey of which is now finished, has led me to a very strong conviction that we must go straight to the fountain-head and model our metre not on the Latin but on the Greek. I believe that our language is singularly like ancient Greek in intonation, and that we can transplant their metrical system with greater ease and with less change than was possible to the Romans. Here I have at a

word brought upon myself the most difficult part of my subject, the vexed question of Greek accents. I approach it with the greater hesitation, because I shall find myself, as elsewhere in this paper, but here particularly, in the singular position of feeling quite convinced of an explanation which has apparently never even occurred to any one else, and which consequently, it is fair to guess, will not at first commend itself to any one who reads me.

Mr. Munro, in dealing with the Spedding heresy, states that 'the accent of the old Greeks and Romans resembled our accent only in name, in reality was essentially different.' I may be doing Mr. Munro an injustice, but I believe that the essential difference to which he refers, is fairly to be gathered from these words of Dr. Blass (*Pronunciation of Ancient Greek*, translated by W. J. Purton, p. 131):—'With regard to the accent of words it is well known that in Greek this consisted in voice-pitch, not voice-stress, and still less voice-duration, although in both languages the latter was united with the voice-pitch in the period of their degeneration.' Further, Dr. Blass notes that 'the versification of the classical period makes no account whatever of a word-accent, and indeed, since the accent was musical, there was not the slightest reason why it should.'

Now I regard this view of the matter, which represents Greek accent and intonation as so different from our own that it is impossible we should understand it, to be altogether misleading: I affirm with confidence that not only does this essential difference between Greek and English not exist, but that the words just quoted might have been applied with equal

truth to our own accents. Surely I cannot be entirely mistaken in declaring what seems to me quite undeniable, that the ordinary unemphatic English accent is exactly a raising of pitch, and nothing more. I do not mean to deny that it is possible to accent, or let me rather say to emphasize, a syllable in the other two ways, i. e. by strength or length of tone, but I assert that that is not the commonest method of accentuation \*. If our accents are to degenerate some day into long vowels, as Dr. Blass says has happened to the Greek accents (he instances *xēnūs* for *ἔνεως*, *yēnītō* for *γένεωτο*), it is certain that such degeneration has not taken place yet, and that we freely accent the shortest syllables with the true acute accent. Further, Dionysius mentions that the difference between an acute and grave accent was nearly a fifth; now when I say the words 'upon it,' I believe that I raise my voice about a third on this purely grammatical enclitic accent. The Greeks had besides the circumflex accent, which was midway between their acute and grave: and this also is to be found in English. Notice the difference of pitch with which we say *what?* and *who?* and compare it with *τί*; and *πῶ*; If any one, whose mind is open on this question would read a few words aloud in such a manner as to make the difference of nearly a fifth between any two consecutive syllables, he might judge for himself whether the higher note does not accent its syllable in a very distinct and I should say in a distinctively English manner. It seems to me difficult to

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\* The fact that it is possible, and even usual at the end of a clause, to accent by the contrary process, by lowering instead of raising the voice, does not affect my argument seriously. It is still a question of pitch and not of stress.

imagine a closer correspondence than what one is thus forced to admit. There is however one difficulty of considerable magnitude which makes the Greek accent sometimes impossible to us: and this is due to a well-known peculiarity of our vowel pronunciation. I refer to the fact that our vowels if not followed by a consonant supply themselves with a consonantal *y* or *w* \*. This has a curious and I think indisputable effect on vowels followed by other vowels, namely, that if they are accented they are invariably long. The rule is thus exactly the opposite to the Latin rule. A few instances will be enough, *poet*, *pious* (cf. *impious*), *ruin* †. Even when it is not accented and comes before the accent, such a vowel seems to be always long, as in *reaction*, *pre-eminent*. Consequently, if we use our English pronunciation of the vowel, it would be impossible for us to accent, for instance, the word *altru* aright without lengthening the *iota*.

Except this I do not discover any essential difference between the rules of Greek accentuation and such as might be formulated for English. We allow, it is true, the accent to be thrown back a syllable further; but the rules about acute turning to grave and about enclitics are almost exactly the same—compare *upon it* with *upon all things*, and *to get money* with *to get it*—; and while we are bound to conclude that the three Greek accents were a very rough and unscientific way of expressing all the

\* There is one notable exception to this rule. Syllables ending in *-aw* do not supply themselves with either a *w* or a *y*, but it is remarkable how strong the tendency is to insert an *r*. See p. 158, § 8.

† I should like to suggest this as a possible explanation of the long *e* in the word *rejection*.

variations of pitch extending over the interval of a fifth, we cannot suppose that all the syllables between the accents were strictly monotonous, and free from lesser variations of intonation and accent.

Furthermore, I do not see how any one can contend that the Greek accents were lesser in degree than ours. Surely a fifth is a sufficient interval, not to mention the indirect testimony given by modern Greek to the strength and importance of the old accents. The strength of the Latin accent again is testified to in a remarkable manner by the metres of Plautus: and since a consideration of his metrical treatment of hurried syllables will illustrate our own common practice, and perhaps resolve the old *carpenser* difficulty of Spenser, I will speak of it here.

In ordinary rapid pronunciation we habitually shorten unaccented syllables, often slurring or half leaving out consonants. An extreme instance of such shortening may be seen in Clough's dactyl *silenced but* (see p. 137), where *nd b* have all to be made equivalent to little more than one consonant. I think it must be conceded that such shortening argues a strong accent on the preceding syllable. Well, Plautus makes use of this shortening exactly, and that too in verses that are meant to scan, not merely to go by accent, like Clough's; and his practice is to my mind conclusive to prove the strength of the Latin accent. Such shortening is of course a colloquial licence in Plautus, careless pronunciation being natural on the comic stage, with its imitation of the actual manners of common life: but we do not expect to find such a treatment of syllables in elevated poetry, and thus, though the proper accent of a word was not in any way surrendered in reading Virgil, it would not be

allowed by educated Romans to cause any contraction, the full value being given to every syllable. A sufficient answer then to those who say that to them the second syllable of the word *carpenter* or *organ-voice* is distinctly short, is this: You are associating yourselves by such an admission with the vulgar actors of Plautus rather than the educated readers of Virgil. An unaccented syllable can no doubt be shortened in conversation, even to the extent of saying *dunno* for *don't know*, but is that any reason why we should do so in reading poetry? Our best practice here is just like the Latin: our low comedies even print the words contracted, and so do the French—

Nous qui n' somm's pas d' l'Académie,  
Souhaitons-lui d' ces p'tits plaisirs-là.

I have said that accent does not lengthen a syllable: but has it any effect at all on quantity? I think it has. Its function is to preserve a syllable from conversational shortening, and I would go further and say that it preserves it also from lengthening. Far from believing that it is the accent of the verse that causes the occasional lengthening of syllables *in arsi*, I hold that it is the absence of the natural accent that allows of such lengthening. I mean in such cases as—

τίπτε Θέτι τανύπεπλε.  
Tribuláque trabeaéque.

Such lengthening (at least wherever the succeeding consonant is a mute) would, I believe, be absolutely impossible if the accent were upon it; but of course I may be confuted by an instance. The accent has besides an importance in determining whether a syllable is long by position, as we shall see later, p. 156, § 4, and 160, § 14.

If the foregoing considerations be of any value, they will have gone far to support my contention of the similarity between English and Greek accentuation; and the reader may fairly look for a solution of the vexed question of metrical ictus. He may take an extreme case, a line of Homer, for instance, in which the acute accents do not fall on the places of the metrical ictus, and he may ask how, if he gives full value to these acute accents, he is to express the metre of the line. I do not myself think that this is so great a difficulty as it is generally regarded; and, to give my view more clearly I should separate the question into two distinct parts: *First*, Is the metrical ictus to be observed at all in those places where it disagrees with the speech accent? and if it is to be observed, how far is it to be observed? *Second*, What is the means by which it can be expressed?

In answering the first question the difficulty lies in the extreme variety of opinion which has to be satisfied. There is hardly any consensus even among the most educated readers: some are not content unless the metrical ictus be fully expressed; others neglect it altogether. If there is any agreement it would probably be in such commonly recurring instances as the disyllabic ending of the Ovidian pentameter, where the last syllable is short, or the frequent paroxytone pyrrhic at the end of tragic iambics. I suppose that there is hardly any reader familiar with the classics who would in these cases doubt that it was the intention of the writer to displace the accent, or who would wish to put an accent of any kind on the last syllable of the line. But if this is so in these particular cases, the presumption is very strong that some others

are like them, and that those who prefer to read Virgil without marking the metrical ictus in any place in which it is contravened, probably understand the poet better than do those who require the metrical ictus to be always expressed. At any rate the conclusion may be that the greater or less expression of the metrical ictus is just such a matter of taste as cannot be disputed about.

The second question then comes to this: What means have we to express the combated metrical accent, *when* we desire to do so? The difficulty is of course considerable if the metrical ictus has to overcome the force of a combative acute accent expressed by raising the voice through the interval of a fifth: but this description of the Greek acute accent by Dionysius requires to be explained. It can only have one meaning: It can *not* possibly mean that the voice was raised a fifth at every acute accent; it can only mean that the acute accent marked the syllable where the voice was properly raised in pitch, if it was to be raised at all in the sentence; and that if it was raised, then the fifth was not an uncommon interval: and this will correspond very fairly with our own best way of reading. Any one may try a simple experiment for himself: let him take any three or four lines of blank verse, and mark in them the syllables which he thinks were intended to carry accents; then let him read these lines aloud, raising his voice a fifth at every mark. He will need no argument to convince him that no civilized people within historic times ever read or could have read their poetry or anything else in this manner. If he will then read the same lines as he thinks they should be read, he will find that he uses numberless lesser changes of pitch,

besides other devices of *time*, *tone* and *pause* to interpret the rhythm and metrical structure ; and it is reasonable to suppose that the Greeks had as many. It may also be useful to remark that if one were asked to 'mark the accents' in ten lines of *Paradise Lost*, one would have no scruple in marking the main accents (as the Greeks did) all with the same sign, although one would never contemplate their being all interpreted by the same inflexion of voice ; nor does any hearer, who is listening to a good reader, ever doubt of the rhythm or metre, although it may be often out of his power to define how it has been given. If the verse is purely quantitative, the devices for marking the metrical ictus should, I suppose, be mainly a management of the time ; and as time is quite distinct from accent, there is no cause to fear any confusion between them. Probably our main difficulty is that we have not an exercised faculty to distinguish long and short syllables. It is the chief object of this essay to establish a true quantitative English prosody, and render it easy for any one to distinguish our syllables by the same rules of value as the Greek did.

It would indeed be impossible to exaggerate the confusion of mind which writers on the subject of the quantity of English syllables have exhibited : and as I am afraid that I may have left an erroneous impression of my meaning in what I stated about the 'shortening' of the second syllable in *silenced but* (on p. 145), I will explain myself on this point again in connexion with a criticism of Dr. Whewell's, which will also illustrate a statement made at the beginning of this essay, that modern and ancient verse are both a play of accent against quantity, with the attitude reversed. Dr. Whewell in an article in

*Macmillan's Magazine* (1862), arguing against the view that the consonantal nature of English prevents smoothness, asks, What could be smoother than the line—

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn—?

and yet, he says, what a surprising short syllable *-censbr-* is! This proves to his mind that the English tongue has a peculiar power of running rapidly over an agglomeration of consonants. It proves of course nothing of the sort, *-censbr-* being I should say not only not short, but the longest syllable in the line. It pleases the ear just because it is long, and with its length combats the accent\*. This principle of quantity warring against accent is in my opinion exactly paralleled by the contrary process in classical metres. The word *hollow* is a Southey trochee, but a classical iambus: considered as the first the accent rules, and is contradicted by the quantity: considered as the second the quantity rules and is contradicted by the accent.

If the above considerations are as sound as they appear to me, there remains only one point for discussion, and that is the practical question as to whether English syllables can be reduced to a prosody of longs and shorts similar to the Greek. Before any experiment in the adoption of classical metres can be actually made it is necessary that rules for the determination of quantity must be set forth, and agreed upon. But to

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\* There is perhaps some antagonism of idea as well as of rhythm between the two halves of this verse. Gray probably got his *incense-breathing* from Milton's pictures of morning, see, e.g. *Par. Lost*, ix. 193, where 'on the approach of morn . . . In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed Their morning incense,' etc., there is something heavy and delayed which is not of the same idea as *breezy call*. [R.B.]

conclude my argument I should like first to reconsider the conditions of the Elizabethan failure, and compare that attempt with the successful transplantation of the Greek prosody made by the Romans, and finally try to dispose of some of the main objections which are nowadays urged against its adoption in English.

To compare first the Elizabethan attempt with the Roman: the actual conditions were not dissimilar. The Romans had only the rough Saturnian metre \* to call their own, the Elizabethans had only their Chaucerian heritage; Romans and Elizabethans alike were struck by the obvious superiority of quantitative verse almost as soon as they became acquainted with it, and proceeded to adapt their language to it. It is at this point that the parallel fails. We might conceivably cite Plautus as a transitional stage, but I think we should be wrong in doing so. His verse is merely a simplifying and vulgarizing of the scansion as it is of the metre. Unaccented syllables that can be slurred in pronunciation he scans short, because on the comic stage such clipping would be natural and almost inevitable. But he has no doubt whatever of the true quantity of the syllables: the converse process is never found; the accent never leads him to suppose that a short syllable is long. We must take it then that the Romans from the moment that they began to write quantitative verse were never in any

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\* I do not now think it correct to say, as is often said, that the Saturnian was a (purely) accentual metre. In the familiar line

*Immortales mortales si foret fas flere*

the accents on *immortales* and *foret* will be *immortáles fâret*, while the beat of the verse would require

*Immórtalés mortáles sí forét fas flére.*

doubt as to the quantity of their syllables. They were transplanting a system from a language, if I may be allowed to say so, even more different from theirs than it is from ours. Yet though it may be called an artificial product, there was none of that astonishing diversity of opinion, that amazing elasticity and inconsistency which we see in even the most conscientious of Elizabethan experimentalists.

We need not go very far to find some explanation of this really surprising difference. The Englishmen had not the advantage of hearing Greeks read their Homer, and besides, our literature had advanced considerably beyond Saturnians, which made us less ready for innovation. But the true explanation is, I believe, to be found in our spelling, and in the fact that verse is to us so much a matter for the eye, which is a reason why we read classics with terrible false quantities, and mind it not in the least so long as we see the line perfect before our eyes. And so if we cannot hear the accent perpetually forcing the metre upon us, an indulgence which Southey and Longfellow seldom deny us, we like to see our double letters marking the long syllable and our single the short, even when the result is to make *shining* a pyrrhic and *shinning* a trochee. It will not be until we spell our words with a separate symbol for the long and short vowels and with no doubling of consonants at all, as in *Pierman's Phonetic Short-hand*, that the ordinary English mind will succeed in detecting a false quantity. We like for convenience' sake to think that we can use *me* and *thee* and *he* long or short as we like. Yet, what Roman ever supposed that he might scan *tu*, *te*, or *me* short? He must, as we are, have been filled with envy,

when he thought of those delightful words *με, σε, ου*, but his judgement was unerring, his manhood unshaken. We should emulate him and make the best of a language, which I am persuaded is more like Greek in sound than his was.

I will now consider one or two objections which are commonly urged against the adoption of the classical system in English. The commonest is perhaps that our language is too monosyllabic. Whether or not this is a serious indictment against English, I leave others to judge. For myself I do not see why it is more fatal to metrical than to ordinary verse. It will be said perhaps that it unfits the language for the long sonorous roll of the hexameter. But there are many English metres as long as the hexameter, even if some of them be for printers' purposes divided at the caesura: for instance, let me take this line from Mr. Swinburne, which contains eight feet, 'iambics' and 'anapaests' mixed:—

Ere Eron arose in an age that was darkness and shone by his radiant  
side.

Here there are no less than eleven monosyllables, yet I do not find that the verse halts on that account. Still I do not deny that the monosyllabic nature of English will cause an unavoidable, but not necessarily regrettable, modification of the rhythms. Monosyllabic endings, like *νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς, γηθόσυνος κήρ*, must be expected to be far more frequent. If we did not like them at first, we should get used to them. Moreover, considering our immense number of proclitics, I think the monosyllabic nature of the language is somewhat exaggerated.

Secondly, it is said that we are lamentably deficient in pure long vowels, and that two such consecutive are hardly to be

found. The first of these two statements I am inclined to demur to altogether. In the line quoted above, for instance—not chosen for this purpose—there are eight pure long vowels in the eight feet, a very fair proportion, as I think. In this last clause that I have written, of seventeen words, there are ten. Here at least our monosyllables stand us in good stead, the large majority being pure long vowels. The second clause of this objection is at first sight rather significant, though a vast number of double words, such as *always*, *daylight*, *twilight*, *warfare*, *waylay*, *sea-mew*, *wheat-ear*, *heyday*, *seaside*, *heirloom*, will occur to any one. But it is after all due principally to the fact that ours is not an inflexional language, and I do not think it would be unfair to equate (this is just such a word, by the way) *Salvo* with *I go*, *Salvo!* with *he goes*, etc.

A third objection often urged is that our language is such a mass of consonants—‘too craggy,’ as Nash puts it—that the easy flow of metre is impossible. I am in a curious position with regard to this objection, because my great difficulty, mentioned above, is to persuade any one that an agglomeration of consonants does retard the verse at all. Of course if the rules of quantity by *position* are continually disregarded, this ‘cragginess’ is the inevitable result, and a very proper retribution. It seems to me that these two objections, (1) that our language is too consonantal, (2) that our consonants are not strong enough to affect quantity—are directly contradictory, and unless one is withdrawn, I do not see why I should answer either. Both I consider at least flagrant over-statements.

A further objection, if it is an objection, is the extreme

difficulty of writing such verse, and the bar it would be to any freedom of thought. This difficulty would be very real. A beginner would find his path as thickly strewn with thorns as that of a boy learning Latin verses. He would make false quantities far more ghastly, and his tongue would refuse, quite rightly, to shift the accent on to the long syllable \*, a difficulty which does not present itself to the Latin verse writer. But practice and severe correction will in the end, I believe, make the rules of metre very little more galling than the rules of rhyme, and the feeling of victory even more enchanting. The quantity of the word will be felt at once, and its different possible positions in the verse, which is, I suppose, if we care to analyse it, the way in which such verse is written.

It might perhaps be thought that a very large proportion of English words could not be made to fit into metre at all. I can only say I have not found this to be the case. On Tennyson's principle it would of course be so; if the accent and the long, syllable are always to coincide, we should be very severely handicapped. But on my principle comparatively speaking very few words refuse to find a place, and we should remember that the Greek dramatists were forbidden the whole class of words in -οσύνη, and the Roman hexametrists all words in -atio.

In the tabulated prosody which I now offer, I have not aimed at exhaustive completeness; though I have taken pains

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\* A warning is perhaps necessary about syllables long or short by position. Just as the gradations of accent are infinite, so are the gradations of quantity. So they were to the Romans, who borrowed the Greek mute and liquid rule to mark the exact border-line between long and short. If then the difference between long and short seems in some instances extremely slight, there is no real cause for surprise.

to group together under general laws all the points which have occasioned me difficulty, and which I have had to decide for myself. There may be many things which have not occurred to me, and many of my conclusions to which exception will be taken. I have visions, as Webbe had, of a gradual crystallization of opinion on these various points, but for the present my own alterable views may be of service.

### III.

#### OF VOWELS LONG OR SHORT BY NATURE.

§ 1. Where the accent is on the vowel, its quantity is never in doubt, as *hāring*, *hitting*.

§ 2. Where the accent is not on the vowel, the quantity may be discovered by accenting the syllable, unless the vowel is indeterminate (as it more often is than not).

§ 3. All indeterminate vowels are short, except when lengthened by position.

† An indeterminate vowel is one which has lost its distinctive character, its pronunciation depending almost entirely on its surroundings. The symbol generally used for it is *ə*. Instances are *prōfess*, *fortūnāte*. If the accent were put on these vowels they would scan *prōfess*, *fortūnāse*. Short *i* never becomes indeterminate, and in fact it often occurs in a lower stage of degradation, as the pronunciation *fortunit*, *passige*, which we often hear, proves.

§ 4. A vowel followed immediately by another vowel in the same word is, if accented, long, as *pīety*, *dēity*, *rūin*; if

unaccented, it is long if it precedes the word-accent, short if it follows it, as *prē-éminence*, *immédi-ate*.

§ 5. No final open vowels (that is vowel-sounds not closed with a consonant) are short in English, except *y* and *a* (or *ough* in *thorough* and *borough*). Exceptions are the proclitics *the*, *to*, and *a*, and *be* when it is used proclitically (as for instance in the passive infinitive, *tō bē lét*), and *me* when it is used enclitically, as *gíve mē*.

§ 6. Notice generally that whereas in Greek a proparoxytone accent is often followed by a long vowel-sound, as *γένοιτο*, this appears never to be the case with us, except in compound words, as *blef-ēater*, and perhaps [also such words as] *nárrōw-by*, *nárrōw-ness*. Such vowels have all become indeterminate, except of course the short *i*: *pérsonal* will serve as an instance.

§ 7. *Ar*, *er*, *ir*, *or*, *ur* (and syllables however spelt, if pronounced as we pronounce these spellings), when not followed by a vowel must be regarded as unclosed vowels. We do not now pronounce their *r* as a consonant, except when followed by a vowel. In that case such syllables are governed by the ordinary rules, e.g. *fōreign*, *ōral*, where the accent shows the quantity; *dolōrow*, where the *o* has become indeterminate. When followed by a consonant their length should always be preserved, except where this is forbidden by the principle mentioned in the last section (§ 6). I should thus scan *sērve*, *prēsērvation*, *rivērbank*; but *gōvērnor* seems to me now (in spite of *govern*) unquestionably the true quantity. The long vowel will however be preserved in *blissēr-ly*, *bitiēr-ness*,

as in *nárrōw-ly*, *nárrōw-ness*. Those then who hold that the *r* is still present as a consonant, will differ from me here only in such words as *gouvérnour*, *liběrtty*, etc.

\* Monosyllables in *or*, etc., are always long; except sometimes *for* and *or*, when these words are pronounced (as they sometimes are, but never need be) indeterminate before a vowel, and *her*. [See note on p. 163.]

\*\* *For* when it takes the enclitic accent is, however, often pronounced short: we often hear *fórrit*, for *fór it*.

#### OF ELISION AND LIQUID ENDINGS.

§ 8. Elision of a final syllable it is convenient and rational to disallow altogether. We do not run the vowels of different words together, but either insert a slight consonantal *y* or *w* between them, or are careful to preserve hiatus. After the sounds *au* and *a* (as in *saw* and *thorough*), where no such consonant can naturally be introduced, the hiatus is very marked. In saying *saw I*, though if pronounced rapidly the words will form a creditable diphthong, we take particular pains to avoid it, which leads in extreme cases even to the introduction of an *r*. Notice also in this connexion the curious insertion of a *y* in *sawyer* and *lawyer*.

§ 9. Elision then—and this includes Homeric shortening—is to be disallowed. Milton's use of it seems to have been fiction only; its purpose to justify the trisyllabic foot. On the other hand his elision in the middle of a word seems both useful and rational; *rūin* as well as *rūn*, *bēing* as well as *būing*. It seems that we can if we like leave out the intruding *y* or *w* in

these cases : the Greek variants σφῶν and σφῶιν are to some extent parallel. *Heav'n* as well as *Hēavēn* is also reasonable.

§ 10. With regard to words ending in *le*, *el*, *en*, *on*, etc., some have urged that these are only vowel *l*'s and *n*'s, holding that *able* and *heaven* are only, as philologists would write it, *abl* and *heavēn*; and argue from this that such syllables should scan short before a consonant. To me it seems that there is an indeterminate vowel distinctly present; I should write *abl* and *heavēn*. Even if it is insisted that the vowel in *-ble* is the vowel *l*, surely there is a consonant *l* present also. This is practically acknowledged by Ellis, who writes *aabl* (or *aab'l* for short).

#### OF SHORT VOWELS LENGTHENED BY POSITION.

§ 11. The effect of consonants in lengthening short vowels in Latin may be shown in three stages :

1st, *ēr res*, always long.

2nd, *pharētra*, long or short, i. e. 'doubtful.'

3rd, *marē transit*, always short (with rare exceptions).

From this it seems to follow that the quantity of the *e* in *pharetra* depended on whether the word was pronounced *pharet-ra* or *phare-tra*; and generally the Latin practice of lengthening short vowels before more than one consonant can on this principle be simply explained. When two consonants could be pronounced together and both attached to the following syllable (as was the case with mutes followed by liquids), then the syllable before them might be unaffected by them, and remain short : but when in order to pronounce

them it was necessary to divide them between the syllables (as in *palpo*, which must be said *pal-po*, and cannot be said *pa-lpo*), then the preceding vowel was always affected and lengthened; and it was thus lengthened before all combinations of consonants, except only those of a mute followed by a liquid, and of *qu*.

§ 12. The Greeks, who lengthen a final short syllable before two consonants in the next word (as ἡ δὲ σκιά), must, if I am right, have run their words together more than was natural to the Romans—and this may perhaps explain their strange initial letters ψ, ξ, ζ—and they must have said ἡ δὲ σ κιά. The Romans refused to do this, but before *st* (etc.) they would not scan the syllable short (perhaps unreasonably), and so had to avoid such juxtaposition altogether.

§ 13. The conclusion from these considerations is that when two consonants cannot be attached to the next syllable, they must in that case affect and lengthen a preceding short vowel; but when they can be attached to the following syllable, then they need not affect the preceding syllable.

§ 14. But in English we have rules which limit this liberty. Where in Latin the division of syllables is optional (*pharet-ra* or *phare-tra*), with us it is usually not so. We are governed by the accent: we say *pētrify*, but *árbi-trate*\*, which accordingly can only scan *pētrify*, *arbitrate*. Further, with the Latin

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\* The hyphen in *pētrify*, and above in *pharet-ra*, no doubt exaggerates the difference, for the *t* and *r* are inseparable in pronunciation, but the distinction is real, and it will be readily perceived that in *pētrify* the *t* has a much closer connexion with the vowel that precedes it than it has in *arbitrate*.

'doubtful' combinations I would class those English combinations ending in *w* or *y*, thus *continue*, which is phonetically *contin-yoo* (or as the sound would be represented in Latin, *contin-yu*), should scan *continue*; while *retinue* would be *retinue*; again *liquid* (*llk-wid*), but *obloquy* (*oblo-ky*).

\* As for *liquid*, I feel sure that this is the true quantity with us. It is noticeable that Lucretius scans both *liq-uidus* and *ll-iquidus*. May not the difference in pronunciation account for it?

§ 15. In English then—and this ought to be a great satisfaction to everybody—there will be 'doubtful' syllables only where there is a lesser accent, as *miserāb-ly* or *miserā-bly*. We should allow short syllables before initial *st* (etc.) of the next word.

§ 16. Soft *g* and *ch*. Stanihurst regarded the syllable ending in soft *g* or *ch* as 'doubtful.' He says that the vowels before *g* are short, but 'soomtyme long by position, where D may be inserted, as *passage* is short, but yf you make it long, *passadge* with a D should be written.' As they are really double, there seemed to me at first some reason in this: but I am now convinced that they can never lengthen, because we cannot separate the double sound; we cannot for instance say *mis-she*, *led-zhe*, for *witche*, *ledge*.

§ 17. *ng* must be regarded as a single letter, except when the *g* sound is truly present; thus *singer*, but *finger*.

§ 18. *z*, *sh*, *th*, etc., are single letters.

§ 19. Initial long *u* has always the *y* sound before it, and all

words beginning with it must be regarded as beginning with a consonant.

§ 20. *H* is a consonant with us. This is a deplorable fact, but that it is a fact is evident in such words as *manhood*, which will not scan *mānhood*\*. That *h* is sometimes weak enough (e. g. in *his*, *her*) to be negligible, is a possible view, but at present I am against it.

§ 21. Short monosyllables ending in a consonant seem sometimes to have so much force that they are unwilling to scan short even before a vowel. The reason is that we pronounce them as if the consonant was double, i. e. as we pronounce the *nn* in *innate*. Such words therefore may scan either short or long before a vowel. We may say either

Both to mēn and to wōmen,  
or,  
Both to the mēn and maids,

for the beginning of a hexameter. This rule will also apply to other words accented on the last syllable, as *aber*.

#### DIFFICULTIES DUE TO PRONUNCIATION.

§ 22. Words in *ass*, etc., create a difficulty, because some people give the *a* a broad, and others a short sound, and this can only be met by conforming to your author's pronunciation: and we must follow the same rule with other words the quantity of which differs with different pronunciations. But in the case

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\* The example does not seem well chosen, because it might be urged against it that *man* (as stated in section 19) is one of those words which may double its final consonant. I believe that this last fact was one of Mr. Stone's latest additions. It opens questions which are not fully answered in the following section 21. [R. B.]

of *pass*, etc., it would seem better to avoid using them in places where they could be scanned short.

§ 23. Finally, there is a great difficulty with regard to classical proper names, some of which have to alter their scansion unless we are to alter our pronunciation. My method escapes, it is true, from such barbarities as *Pēnēlōpē* and *Ēvāngēlline*, which are inevitable in verses of the Southey type. But I am bound in consistency to scan *Caṡṡllur*, *Achilles*, *Prīam*; nor is there any place in a hexameter for *Andromeda* and *Nausicaa* (except perhaps by special licence), nor for *Diomedes*. That these quantities should offend classical ears is, I know, inevitable; but it is not my fault that the names are so pronounced. Whether Homeric lengthening in the case of labials and spirants might be allowed, need not be discussed here. It would be a dangerous experiment in our present state of haziness about quantity.



NOTE ON MONOSYLLABLES IN *or*, etc. (see p. 158).

It may save the reader trouble if it is pointed out that the mention of *her* among the exceptions implies that the class here described as '*or*, etc.' is intended to be the same as that treated

of in the main part of § 7, viz. *ar*, *er*, *ir*, *or*, *ur*, etc. This being so, other exceptions (besides *for*, *or* and *her*) may occur to the reader ; e.g. *Sir Andrew* : but *wēr*' for *were*, as sometimes heard in *wēr*' *it so*, would probably have to be excluded as conversational. Though Mr. Stone plainly states that he did not consider his rules as either complete or final, yet it is a pity that we have not his opinion more clearly expressed in detail concerning these difficult syllables. [R. B.]

# INDEXES

THE following three indexes are incomplete, especially the subject-index for those parts of the book where rules are tabulated, for instance the third part of Mr. Stone's tract (p. 156 *ad fin.*), where the matter, being arranged under its proper headings, can easily be found. Regard has been paid to the reader's convenience in facilitating reference to minor details, and in bringing together scattered remarks on the same subject, especially where these occur in the separate tracts, to distinguish which all references to Mr. Stone's tract are bracketed away to the right, thus (. But any one consulting the index may remember that every page-number after 113 must refer to the second tract.

## INDEX OF SUBJECTS

ACCENT, see under Greek *a.*; Recession of *a.*; Stress; and Quantity.

does not lengthen a syllable, (116, 117, 143.

how it may affect quantity, (146.

same now in English as in classical Greek and Latin, 79, (116, 142, 143.

combative *a.* in classic verse, (116; in Stanihurst, (123; and advocated by Calverley, (136.

Accentual hexameter, its structure explained, 105 seq.; English writers of it criticized, (128-141.

accentual verse distinguished from syllabic, 111.

Adjectives in *able*, 7 etc., 52, 53, (159 § 10.

Alexandrine, its construction in Milton, 39, 40.

Authorized Version, M.'s use of it and reasons, 21 n.

BLANK verse, type of, 1.

early, transitional from rhymed couplet, 88.

Break in blank verse—defined, 19; ex. of variety, 20; of single breaks, 20; of double, 21; elaboration of rhythm consequent on variety, 21.

CAESURA, see under Break.

classical c. caused by rhythm, 80.

Choric verse in *Samson* analysed, 41.

Classical prosody advocated at Renaissance, (118).

Colloquial diction, and shortening of words in verse, 102, (145, 151.

Combative accent, (116, 123; see under Accent, and Inversion.

Comic-iambic stanza, 99 etc.

Compensation, 58; see Stress, omitted.

Consonants, double, in English not so pronounced, (121; exceptions, (121, 162; cannot make a vowel long by position, (121, 124, see 133 etc.; absurdities hence involved by English pronunciation of classic verse, (139.

Contractions, of common speech, 10; of perf. part. etc. in *ed*, 10; of perf. part. (etc.) in *en*, 11; of 2nd pers. sing. of verbs, 11; of superlative term. of adj., 11.

of *the*, of *the*, *i' th' midst*, etc., 11.

colloquial c. in good verse, 101, (145, 151.

DACTYLIC (so-called) character of some of the choric verse in *Samson*, 45.

d. often indistinguishable from anapaestic, 95.

Double consonants, see Consonants.

ELISION, see under Trisyllabic.

as used by M., 2, (158; term explained, App. B. 50..

e. of common speech, 2; of open vowels, rules for, 3.

phonetic condition of open vowels, 51, 52.

impurity of English e. of open vowels, (144, 158.

e. with *r*, 4; with *l*, 6; with *n*, 9; with *m*, 25; with initial *y*, 26.

e. of adjective in *ble*, 7.

examples of e. refused by Milton, 29.

- Milton's arbitrary practice of *e.*, 18, 51.  
 his use follows Chaucer, 51; examples, 82.  
 doubtful *e.* in stressed verse, 103.
- Elizabethan attempt at classical verse compared with the Latin  
 imitation of Greek, (151.
- Enclitics, 26, 93, (121, 143, 144, 158.
- Extrametrical syllables,  
 at end of line, 1, 4; in mid-verse, 2, 27; disallowed in *P. L.*,  
 2; defined in App. A. 47.
- FALLING and rising, terms explained, 77.
- Falling rhythms in *Samson* quoted, 34.
- Five-syllable foot, 97.
- GRAMMAR a determinant of metric units in stress-verse, 93,  
 94, 102; Prof. Skeat extending this to syllabic verse, 111.
- Greek accents, (142 etc., and see under Dionysius, index II.  
 not of less force than ours, (145.  
 circumflex paralleled in English, (143.
- Greek model preferred to Latin for English classical verse, (141.
- H DOES not forbid elision in *M.*, 3.  
 a consonant in English, (162.
- Heavy and light syllables, 89 etc.
- Heaviness of initial feet in stress-rhythms condemned, 98, 100 †.
- I. SHORT; elided or contracted, 10, 24, 29.  
 its quality, (156 § 3 †; 157 § 6.
- Iambic and trochaic systems sometimes indistinguishable, 95.
- Iambus: differentiated from English so-called iambus, 79.
- Ictus metrical, how given when combated, (147 etc.
- Initial weak feet in syllabic verse, 13, 17.  
 heavy feet in stressed verse, 98, 100 †.
- Inversion, see Rhythm, and Combative accent.
- Inv. of stress in Milton's blank verse, 15; effect illustrated,  
 17; common inversions, 15; i. following period in sense, 15;  
 exx. of all places of i., 16 etc.; i. of 5th foot discussed, 16;  
 more than one i. in the line, 17, 33, 35 etc.; i. of first two  
 feet, 35.

L. ELISION with *l* in Milton, 6.

*L' Allegro*, etc., verse of described, 31 etc., 75.

Light and heavy syllables defined, 89.

Liquid sounds, 52.

Long and heavy, 89.

M. WHETHER *m* was admitted into M.'s liquid elisions, 25, 28.

Metrical equivalence explained, App. E. 71.

Metrical ictus, see Ictus.

Monosyllabic ending of hexameter, (153; of pentameter, (137.

Monosyllables in caesura, (136.

with open vowels, (121.

N. ELISION with *n*, 9.

Nine-syllable line in Chaucer, 1, 33, 35, 37; in Marlowe, 86.

OBJECTIONS to classical system in English stated and met,  
(153 etc.

Open vowels, see Elision.

quantity of in English monosyllables, (121.

Oxyton, 78.

PEDANTRY in prosody, 99.

Position, quantity by: contradictory views of in English, (154;  
the Latin rule, (159 etc.; the Greek, (160; the English,  
(160.

Prepositions, recession of accent on, 56 etc.

stress-value of proclitic prep. in Milton's verse, 66.

Proclitics, 93, 96, (121, 157.

Pronunciation in Milton, App. E. 64.

list of words of peculiar accent in M., 67.

difference of old pronunciation much exaggerated, 66, 67.

Proper names, classical, their quantity in English, (163.

QU, (160, 161.

Quantity in English, 79, (116; of English vowels, (156 etc.

wrongly confounded with accent or stress, 81, (116, 117.

false classical analogies, 94.

all degrees of, 91, 81, (155.

- uncertain length of some light longs, 103.
- whether affected by juxtaposition, 102.
- inability to distinguish long from short syllables, (116, 149.
- q. and accent, their functions the same in English as in classic verse, only reversed, (118.
- fixity of q. in English asserted by Webbe and Tennyson, (125.
- how affected by accent, (145.
- R. ELISION with *r* in Milton, 4.
  - burr of *er*, 5; quantity of syllables in English which close with untrilled *r*, (157, 158.
  - r* not always trilled in Mid. Engl., 66, 67.
- Realism, how used in romantic art, 48 *n*.
- Recession of accent, 13; treated of in App. D. 53.
  - present in Milton's early poems, 57; excluded from his later, 59; present in Shakespeare, 55; in Shelley, 62; in Chaucer, two examples given, 85.
- Rhyme in blank verse, 87.
- Rhythm, common view of, 30; its variety infinite, 89.
  - r*. of blank verse, 1.
  - inverted *r*., 15; see under Inversion and Combative accent.
  - inverted rising *r*., distinguished from falling *r*., 34.
  - descriptive rhythm, 43.
  - free rhythm carried by disyllabic fictions, 41 etc.
  - Greek rhythms unknown to us, 80.
  - heavier rhythms, 103.
- Rules of stress-prosody, 91 etc.
  - of classical quantity in English, (156 etc.
- SAMSON, verse of, described, 34, 35.
- Saturnian verse, not purely accentual, (151 *n*.
- Short and long syllables, 89 etc.
- Spelling in Milton, 51; inconsistent, 64.
  - s*. in English, confusing, (152.
- Stichomythia, 48.
- Stress; see also under Accent, Inversion, Rhythm, and Falling and rising.

- term explained, 78.  
 naturally assertive in Eng. verse, 73, and App. J. law IV.  
 stress in Shakespeare's later verse, 66.  
 typical number of stresses in blank verse, 1, 12.  
 alternate, 12; omitted, 12, 58; sometimes compensated,  
   14, 58.  
 omitted mid-stress, 14; in Marlowe, 87.  
 conventional stress, 74; 14, C.; not allowed in stress  
   rhythms, 99.  
 bare stress, 75; overladen, 102, 75; double, 103 etc.  
 distinguishes classic rhythms (see Accent), 79.  
 Stressed verse, distinguished from syllabic, 111, 112.  
   rules of it not observed by writers, 76.  
   chief rules, 76; units of, 77.  
   of choruses in *Samson* hampered by fictions, 76.  
   laws of lighter stress rhythms, and tabulation in App. J. 88  
   etc.  
   units given, 97.  
   words of two stresses in, 110.  
 Superfluous syllables, 69.  
 Supernumerary syllables, 1 etc.  
 Syllabic verse distinguished from accentual, 111.  
   deficiency of syllables in, rare, 1; see Nine-syllable line.  
   excess of syllables in, see Supernumerary s.
- TRISYLLABIC verse rhythms, 33, 43.  
   t. feet in Milton, see Elision.  
 Trochaic, see Falling rhythms, and Iambic.
- UNCERTAINTY both of rhythm and scansion, 25.  
 Units of stress-verse, 97.
- W AND Wh, not forbidding elision in Milton, 4.  
   as a glide between open vowels, (144, 158.
- Y INITIAL not forbidding elision, 26.  
   as glide, (144, 158, and before initial U, (161.

## INDEX OF NAMES

ARNOLD, Matthew, (130; his lectures on Homer, (131; his dislike of combative accent, (131-2; his inability to distinguish quantity, (141.

Ascham, (119.

BLAKE, his poetry banned by the schools, 99.

Blass, Dr., on Greek accents, (142 etc.

Bullen, his edition of Marlowe quoted, 85.

his vindication of Peele's originality, 87.

CALVERLEY, his opinion opposed to Arnold, (131.

his theory of rhythm sound, (136 etc.

character of his hexameters not corresponding, (137-8.

his inconsistency, (137.

Chaucer, value of termination *-able* in his verse, 53, 83.

Milton's adoption of his prosody, 51, 65.

specimens of his elisions, etc., 82 etc.

two lines quoted and discussed, 69.

his Nine-syllable line, q.v.

recession of accent, two examples quoted, 85.

Clough, 102, 145.

his spiritual treatment of unpoetic subjects, 106 n.

*Bosnie* quoted and its prosody discussed, 107 etc.

his *Actaeon*, (124.

his classical experiments and false quantities, (133.

Cochrane, his accentual hexameters, (132.

Coleridge, his *Christabel*, its prosody examined, 73; his hexameters, (130; elegiac couplet quoted, (135; his hendecasyllables, (130.

DANTE, his use of the Vulgate, 22.

Dart, his Homer, (132.

Dionysius on Greek accent, (143, 148.

Drant, Dr., translation of Horace, (120.

ELLIS, Alex., 67 n., 83.

Ellis, F. S., his concordance to Shelley, 63.

FRAUNCE, Abram, (119, 125; quoted, 126.

GRAY, line of *Elegy* criticized, (150.

Guest, Dr., quoted, (117.

HARVEY, Gabriel, (119, 120; a specimen of his verse, (122;  
his dictum on position, (122.

Hawtrej, Dr., his hexameters, (132.

Heber, Bp., his prosody examined, 92.

Heine, his practice in stressed verse, quoted, 100 etc.

Herschell, his Homer, (132.

Hopkins, Gerard, on metrical equivalence, 71.

Horace, 80.

JONSON, Ben, his opinion of Fraunce's hexameters, (126.

KINGSLEY, his hexameters, (130.

LONGFELLOW, (152; *Evangeline* quoted and criticized, 108 etc.;  
M. Arnold's opinion of his hexameters, (131.

MARLOWE, characteristics of his verse, 86; illustration quoted,  
85.

Mayor, Prof., his idea of classic verse, (118.

Milton, his system of blank verse defined, 19.

his rules of prosody adopted from Chaucer, 51, 65.

arbitrary application of the same, 18.

relaxed in later poems, 24; and not much differing from  
other poets, 29.

his pretension to distinguish 'short and long' inscrutable,  
89 n.

Morris, Dr., his curiously wrong and repellent representation of  
Chaucer's pronunciation, 69; his text of *Tales* quoted, 82-3.

Munro, H. A. J., (139.

his criticism of Spedding, (140 etc.

his views similar to Puttenham's, (141.

on Greek accent, (142.

- NARES, his *Orthoepy*, quoted, 67.  
 Nash, (127 ; quoted, (119, 154.  
 OVID, 80, (147.  
 PEELE, anticipated Marlowe's style, illustration quoted, 87.  
 Plautus, his colloquial diction and consequent corruption of true quantity, (145, 151.  
 Puttenham, his foolish book, quoted, (127 etc.  
 ROSSETTI, his modern pronunciation of some terminations, 53.  
 SCHMIDT, Dr. A., on Shakespeare, quoted, 54 etc., 63.  
 Shakespeare, 9, 49, 53, 70, 88.  
     recession of accent in, 53 etc.  
     his later verse ruled by stress, 66.  
     his use of extrametrical syllable in dialogue, 47.  
 Shelley, his pronunciation of adj. in *able*, 52.  
     his use of recession of accent, 62.  
     his *Sensitive Plant*, prosody criticized, 98 etc., 102.  
     his 'Away, the moor,' prosody explained, 103 ; and of 'Ah, sister, desolation,' 105.  
 Sidney, (120 ; quoted, his quantities, (123.  
 Skeat, his analysis of syllabic verse by units of stress-prosody, 111.  
 Southey, (128 etc., 152.  
 Spedding, Jas., (138.  
     his criticism of M. Arnold, sound, (138.  
     his type-words of English quantity, (139.  
     his Virgilian hexameters, (140 ; their false quantities, (140.  
 Spenser, his enthusiasm for the classical system of verse, (120, 126 ; his experiments, (120.  
 Stanihurst, (119 ; his Virgil, (123 ; quoted, (124-125.  
 Sweet, Dr., 67 n.  
 Swinburne, quoted, (130, 153.  
 TENNYSON, Lord, his dislike of accentual hexameters, (129 ; and of combative accent, (135, 155.  
     his experiments, (134 ; his false quantities, (122, 135, 136.

- his *obiter dicta*, (134 ; his belief in fixity of English quantity, (136 ; his *scissors* and *gruel*, (136.  
Tyrwhitt, his edition of *Canterbury Tales*, 68 ; wrong explanation of some of Chaucer's and Milton's rhythms, 69.

VIRGIL, 79, 80, (145, 146.

WACE, quoted, 67.

Watson, Dr., his classical verse quoted, (119 ; his false quantities, (120.

Webbe, (119 ; his discourse, (124, 126, 156.

Whewell, Dr., (132, 149.

## INDEX OF WORDS

ADVERSE, 60. aitha, 144. and, 13. annus, 139. arbitrate, 160.	IDOLATRY, 25, 44. immediate, 157. impious, 144. incense-breathing, 90, 150. infinite, 38. invincible, 37-8. invisible, 38. iron, 9. irresistible, 37-8.	poet, 144. pre-eminent, 144, 157. preservation, 157. prison, 10.
BEING, 18, 158. bittern, 139. bitterness, 157.	LAWYER, 158. ledge, 161. liberty, 158. liquid, 161.	QUANTITY, 139. quiddity, 139.
CANO, 139. Canterbury, 69. capital, 10, 24, 29. capitoline, 10. carpenter, 120, 122, 145. complete, 59. continue, 161.	MISERABLY, 161. misery, 6, 25.	REACTION, 144. reicio, 144 n. retinue, 161. river-bank, 157. ruin, 144, 156, 158.
DHAAH, 69. divine, 59, 62.	NARROWLY etc., 157.	SAWYER, 158. scissors, 136. serene, 59, 62. serve, 157. seven, 9, 10. sewer, 4. silenced, 137, 145. slumbers, 139. solemnise, 123. spirit, 5. sublime, 59. supper, 139. supreme, 57, 59, 62.
BEV'NING, 9. evil, 9. ev'n, 9. extraordinary, 27. extreme, 59, 62.	OBLOQUY, 161. or, 158. organ-voice, 137.	UN-, 60. universal, 38.
FOR, 158. fortunate, 156.	PALPO, 160. pass, etc., 162. passage, 161, 156, 133. Penelope, 132. perilous, 6. petrify, 160. pharetra, 159. pious, 144, 156. pitons, 83, 85 ex.	WHEREON, 61. witch, 161. without, 56-7, 61.
GOVERNOUR, 157. gruel, 135-6.		
HEAVEN, 9, 159. her, 158. hollow, 150.		

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